ADDRESSES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

ARCHBISHOP BENSON

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ADDRESSES

ON

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BY

EDWARD WHITE BENSON

SOMETIME ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Delivered to Ladies in Lambeth Palace Chapel during the Years 1887 *to* 1892

Τίς εἶ, κύριε; τί ποιήσω, κύριε;

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN my father's book on the Apocalypse was published in 1900, it was necessary to remind the reader that, though the book had been written out, and in some parts revised, no part had the advantage of the author's final touch.

In the present case a more extensive apology must be made. The "Addresses" are at two removes from being the literary production of my father's hand; they were never written by him, but vigorously and colloquially delivered from brief notes; and the whole text of the book is composed of reports which he was never able to revise.

The only parts with any such touch of finish are the short analyses at the head of each Address; these, sometimes drawn up and corrected under great pressure on the morning of the day when the Address was to be delivered, were printed on fly-leaves for the help of the congregation. Some addition of classifying headings has been made to mark the place of each Address in the scheme gradually developed; but except for this, and the correction of minor errors unnoticed at the time, the analyses are untouched.

The marginal notes are from his own note-book, and so far as they are given, are unaltered except for the introduction of explanatory words; they will help to check the correctness of reports; "as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies" the terse phrases will fix a thought which might be carried away on the flow of words. "The power of Mattins over imprisoned and sleeping souls": "Living to vanity with a religious twist": "Living souls recovering dead souls," are not sentences that easily escape the memory.

B. A.

It will readily be seen, by anyone who compares, how very greatly my father has depended on Lewin's valuable "Life and Epistles of S. Paul" for details of historical circumstance and not seldom for illuminating comparison. The reference is so constant that this inclusive statement must cover the generality of points, though to some particular attention is called by the notes. Lewin's book, which first appeared in 1851, and of which greatly revised editions appeared from time to time[1], was well abreast with the historical knowledge of the time; but later work has been rewarded with an abundant harvest, and Professor Ramsay's "S. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen" (freely referred to in footnotes, which are almost entirely editorial[2]) did not appear until 1895, three years after these Addresses were ended. Isolated points of difference can be corrected and noted, but it would have been an anachronism to substitute a later system of dating for the sake of greater correctness. I have therefore, in cases of difference, noted Professor Ramsay's dates in the margin; and the reader will find at the end a table of his system, with page references to his book, which was drawn up by Miss Fowler for the use of the S. Paul's Association and is by her permission inserted here. Professor Ramsay has kindly brought this table up to date in accordance with the results of his recent inquiries into Pauline chronology.

In speaking of the reports themselves I must first express my thanks to all those who have so cordially and eagerly put their own notes into my hands for the compiling of this book; but especially to the Hon. Albertina Grosvenor, Miss Gertrude and Miss Edith Loyd, but for whose reports some of these Addresses could never have been reconstructed. One or two reports were taken by my sister and some by myself. Towards the end of the time reports were made by a shorthand writer engaged by Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, to whom thanks are due not only for this, but for her Introduction to what follows; in which she gives, as she alone could give, an account of the circumstances under which the Addresses were delivered.

[1] The pages of quotation are taken from the two volume quarto edition (third) of 1875.

[2] A few are such notes of his own as could not be introduced with text or marginal notes, e.g. that on p. 645 and the first part of that on p. 95.

In these circumstances are found the explanation, not only as the Duchess shews, of the prominence and emphasis of certain ideas; but also what, as Editor, it is my business to note,—the manner of expression and the language.

The principal thing was to give a living picture of the time of the Apostles, and the parallelism of problems of the Church at that time with those of the Church to-day—the aeonian warfare, the perpetual edification of the Church of Christ.

On the one hand this produced a modernity of expression which is often a little startling, but which is so characteristic of my father's line of thought and of himself that I have refrained from substituting more ordinary terms even for the "desperadoes" and "dervishes" sworn to kill Paul (pp. 569, 570).

But secondly it led to the delineation of pictures necessarily problematical, which became so real and vivid in his hands that it was impossible not to use them in a more substantive manner than criticism should strictly allow.

My father's mind was constructive rather than critical, and yet the two are like the sides of a strong arch, mutually supported and supporting; on which, as on the cryptic vaulting of a great church, the fabric of truth must most securely rest. My father's general attitude to biblical criticism has been elsewhere expressed[1]; the relation of the Addresses to the questions popularly mooted I have touched upon in the note, p. 192.

The style I have not tried to alter beyond sometimes suppressing repetitions which are characteristic of Addresses so given; and putting the inversion of emphatic delivery into such an order of sentence as gives a truer value to the reader's eye. Any attempt to impress literary style upon material which had never taken literary shape in the author's mind, must be doubly unsuccessful, weakening evidential value without adding characteristic form.

My father used, I believe, in reading the passages from the Acts, the Authorised Version, guarded by his own direct translations. As these have been only in rare cases recorded, the best compromise seemed to be, for the sake of accuracy, the Revised

[1] *Fishers of Men*, pp. 87—95.

Version. In Scriptural quotation both Authorised and Revised Versions are used, for although there may be point in quoting always from one text, there can be little reason for quoting always one translation; and my father valued in many cases the familiar poetical flow of the Old Version, above the verbal exactness of the Revised.

Verification of facts and sources has been necessary, and statements which could not be substantiated at any rate with probability[1] have been guarded or suppressed. For note 1, p. 438, I am indebted to Mr Richardson, Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and for that on the Beautiful Gate, p. 532, to the kindness of Mr Israel Abrahams and Mr C. G. Montefiore, Editors of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*.

Throughout this, as well as the earlier volume, my thanks are due to M. Alexis Larpent for his affectionate and untiring zeal in correcting and verifying. And I must express my gratitude to Professor Collins, of King's College, London, who has read the proofs at each stage, for his wisdom, care and kindness, in criticizing, defining and fortifying points which had been hastily uttered, or which reports could but roughly render.

MARGARET BENSON.

[1] Cf. p. 339. The statement about tax-gatherers is certainly true, though no definite reference can be found.

INTRODUCTION.

THE circumstances which led to the delivering of the following Addresses call for a few words of explanation. In the year 1885 a Mission was held in the West-end of London, the preparation for which included a thoughtful review of the religious condition of the educated and leisured classes. Many persons were sadly and, in the main, truly convinced that the hold on moral and religious truth had slackened amongst them, and they noted the changes in social habits which pointed to this conclusion. It requires no profound acquaintance with human nature and no wide knowledge of history to predict that disintegration follows in the individual and in the social life when the higher laws which govern our being are persistently disregarded in favour of the lower; destructive forces, ruinous in their nature and far-reaching in their consequences, may be at work where they are least suspected to exist.

Although it may be true that the influence of the rich and leisured class which constitutes the social world of London can neither raise nor depress the moral tone of the nation at large, yet few would deny that it has a considerable effect in both directions.

It was felt, therefore, that a special effort should be made at the time of the Mission to bring home such considerations to those persons who from their position and influence may be regarded as specially responsible for the tone of society. A meeting held at Lambeth Palace was attended by about forty or fifty ladies, who

expressed deep interest in, and sympathy with, the movement.

A suggestion for a course of Addresses from the Archbishop on subjects bearing on social life and its responsibilities took shape, and in Lent 1885 the first Lecture was given.

By a strange coincidence, the time chosen was one of peculiar solemnity. The Soudan Campaign had just opened. Many hearts were aching with anxiety for their loved ones in the field, and many and fervent were the Intercessions offered on their behalf. The Address was preceded by a short service of an impressive character in the Chapel. The Versicle (with which it opened) 'The Master is come and calleth for thee,' and the Response 'And she, when she heard that, arose quickly and came unto Him,' touched the note of appeal to the heart and conscience of each one present.

The tender wail of the *Miserere* or the tranquil cadences of the Hymn of S. Robert of France[1] rose and died away, and then, amid a silence that could be felt, Bibles were opened, for it was an hour of high import to many a soul.

Not a few will recall the powerful and yet subtle interpretation of the Word of God which first startled them into attention and became, as years went on, the guiding force of their inner lives. The Great Interpreter was Himself surely at work, for in truth it might be said, as of old, '*Then* opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.'

[1] *Veni Sancte Spiritus:*

"Come, Thou Holy Spirit come
And from Thy celestial home
Shed a ray of light Divine."

(*H. A. & M.* 156).

The Lectures, originally planned only for the Lent of 1885, could not be brought to a close, for they went forward by their own impetus[1]. The Chapel was crowded, and year by year the demand for seats far exceeded the space. By degrees a regular attendance settled into an average of between ninety and a hundred at each Lecture, and many became careful students of the portion of Scripture selected. The Gospel of S. Matthew was the first subject chosen, the Book of the Acts followed, and in the closing years, from 1893 to 1896, the first Epistle to the Corinthians and part of the second were read and considered. It would be presumptuous to attempt any kind of appreciation of the worth and delicacy of these Expositions of Holy Scripture. But it may be permitted to one who followed each course, with scarcely an exception throughout the eleven years during which the Lectures were given, to indicate briefly the dominant notes of the teaching they contained.

1. In the Addresses on the Acts, and indeed throughout the Archbishop's teaching, we find an almost startling perception of the relation of the great Christian doctrines to the fundamental characteristics of human nature which issue in the familiar facts of human life. Many writers on both Religion and Morals have borne witness to this relation, but it is not given to all to *feel* it with the intensity and fervour which inspired his teaching. The common tendency to regard the truths of the Christian Religion as an addition to rather than as an integral part of life in its ordinary manifestations, had no place in his mind. He had penetrated (as far perhaps as may be) into the depths of the mysterious truth that 'God and Humanity are One,' and thence flowed his large and hopeful interpretation of the problems of human life.

[1] Cf. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii. p. 210, note, "My εὐσχήμονες."

The revelation of the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, is the supreme and central truth which draws all others into harmony and proportion. All light dispersed through all ages, whether dim or bright, steady or fitful, can be but 'a ray of light Divine.' In the mute witness of love and sacrifice which differentiates the human race, even in its lowest form, from the animal creation, he marked the self-revealing work of Christ. In all the action of restoring and remedial powers, he perceived the Lord Himself fashioning anew the marred and broken image of sin-stained human nature. The errors, sins voluntary and involuntary, hindrances, follies and crimes of the world, point to the ruin and weakness wrought by the action of hostile spiritual powers on the disordered nature and will of fallen men. Action and re-action thus advance and retard the end which the Divine purpose has in view, namely the restoration of man to the likeness of God. Hence, it follows that no human effort in unity with the Divine Aim is isolated or tentative; all form part of a great whole. The Church is not an afterthought or an outcome of the spread of Christian truth but an Eternal Necessity. Her teaching is no arbitrary system, no mere ordered arrangement of tradition; but rather is it the revelation of that fuller and more abundant Life which, rising through the natural to the spiritual, attains its true development in a perfected state of being. Thus, Baptism is the spiritual complement to natural birth; Prayer and Praise the higher form of speech; Holy Communion the food and sustenance of the spirit; Service to God and man the natural and necessary type of action; Penitence recognises the sin and pain of life; Absolution its remedies and healings; in a word, the rites of the Church cannot be other than they are, human nature being what it is. If, therefore, the indi-

vidual seeks for a completed redemption of spirit, soul and body; if the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' is to be reached by a redeemed and restored humanity, the veils of earth can never wholly hide the Christ Himself, risen, glorified, triumphant, at work among the least as among the greatest of the world's issues. Christ *is*, not *was*, in the midst of us. The phrase, so familiar to those who heard these Addresses, 'Christ in the great towns,' 'Christ in the villages,' and the like, is an instance of this line of thought. He would quote Acts i. 1, 'All that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach,' and point out that the continued work was being accomplished through Christ's Body, the Church. We see Christ, as through a veil, raised indeed, now and again, but, when it falls, we see Him still.

2. 'He always wins who sides with God,' and ultimate triumph is no doubtful or precarious event.

But this calm certainty is gained at the cost of that quickened perception of the nature of the conflict, which is written in many a poignant sentence here and elsewhere. As has been already said, all antagonism has an origin greater than in the human will; the latter is the instrument, or becomes the victim of the great Enemy. The seven spirits that seize and inhabit the empty dwelling of the unspiritual being are no mere allegory; they are here recognised in and around us. We boast that we have analysed and tabulated all such phenomena, and that there is no place for speculative fancies. It may be that the forces of evil receive no recognition, not because they do not exist, but by reason of a dim spiritual eye and a dormant spiritual power. For—if we wrestle at all—'we wrestle not with flesh and blood.' All Christian experience is agreed on that.

This aspect of the struggle, if considered in itself,

might lead us to lay stress on the more violent and aggressive acts as evidences of sin. But this would ill accord with the mind of the Archbishop. He did not regard crime as the worst form of sin; it is too overt, too reckless to be thus counted. The perversion of truth and goodness, the distortions and travesties of Religion, the 'salt' which has not only 'lost its savour' but corrupts what it was intended to preserve; these things are of the essential nature of sin. Pietists who ignore morality, fanatics who hate man while they profess to love God, will re-appear in all ages, and perchance under conditions which tend to modify coarser outbreaks. The more intricate combinations seem no less to belong to all time. The figure, so vividly described in these pages, of Simon the sorcerer, the 'fascinating man of the world,' who knows how to deal with all classes of men, and would fain add a touch of mysticism to his already varied acquirements, is not unfamiliar to our contemporary literature. Nor is the commercial value of a moral aphorism, or of a religious phrase underestimated in our own day. Perverted religion is a far more deadly thing than irreligion, for by it the well is poisoned at its source.

But deeper still. As a student of history, he had marked the signs of the 'filling of the cup' as the great civilizations totter to their fall. The recurrence of these phenomena—the insolent pride of disordered wills, the cynical satisfactions, the sensual indulgences and the intellectual exaltations—presented to his imagination the embodiment of the World-Spirit, the Anti-Christ, who, by means of counterfeit goodness, of false culture and unbounded, though not unrefined license, seeks to blind men to the sight of their true Lord and King.

In the Cathedral of Orvieto, a great fresco by Luca Signorelli sets forth this Vision of Sin. The Anti-Christ

stands on a pedestal surrounded by his followers who are fascinated by the beauty and dignity of a face which faithfully reproduces the type of the Christ; in the background is his temple, at his feet vessels of gold and silver. Graven on the pedestal is the figure of Balaam, 'the man whose eyes were open' but who nevertheless chose this world's gain. The coarse aspect of vice is felt by all; its real terror may lie in its subtle beauty. The attraction of evil is within the experience of all, its many disguises are only detected by a trained spiritual intuition, such as we find in him who speaks to us through this book.

3. The forces which make for life and death seem to meet in the strange mystery of Suffering. Throughout these Addresses we find this subject treated (speaking generally) in its redemptive and educative aspect. The travail which brings the higher nature to birth, is necessarily attended by pain. The Archbishop would often dwell on the 'transfiguration of trial,' an expression familiar to those who knew his mind on this great question. The dignity and noble bearing of a sufferer who is at one with God are (he would say) visible effects of which we may not miss the meaning.

All the various experiences of life are capable of this high interpretation. Honourable ambitions, cherished schemes, are shattered; all seems wrecked. These humblings, which often touch the point where the higher and the lower motives mingle and from which they diverge, may be tokens of initiation to the higher life. Saul, who set out for Damascus on a war-horse and left it 'let down by the wall in a basket,' is a type of the frustrations of mis-directed energy and an example of the discipline needed for the headstrong will. The 'chosen vessel' must be broken before it can be used.

But trial has higher uses than the education of the individual. The suffering of the members of Christ is of the very nature of the suffering of the Head. The redemptive work of the Cross gathers into itself the pains that the Church must needs experience in unity with her Lord. As we ponder these things the sense of waste and aimlessness passes from us; anguish and desolation have no power to separate us from Him who is Himself the Man of Sorrows. Our sufferings, borne in union with His, have their own place in the purposes of God. This, it is true, is high doctrine, and all may not be able to bear it; but the surrendered will is never wholly without some tender and special intimations of the great hopes and consolations of Faith.

It is needless to strive to penetrate further into the deeper teaching of these pages. Fragmentary as they are, they will recall to those who heard the voice and gazed upon the kindling eye, the hopes and ideals of the days that are gone.

To many who read them for the first time, inequalities will probably appear. These utterances were not destined to be the channel for mere critical discussion or the medium for settling points of controversy. They are too warm and living to serve either purpose. Many, we believe, will turn to them, who in our own times seek to reconcile the Divine and human elements in life, to mark the action of one upon the other, and, above all, to know of a surety that the Lord is among us in these and 'all the days even unto the end of the world.'

ADELINE M. BEDFORD.

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I.

7th May, Eve of Ascension Day, 1887.

Acts i. 1–14.

The Life of Jesus in the Flesh was 'a Beginning' (*The Gospels*). *v.* 1, compare S. Mark i. 1. 2 Cor. v. 16.

His life goes on in *The Acts*—His life with, in, through the Church. In this is the reality of the Church.

v. 3. The indications after His passion of a continued Life, presence, direction, and revelation.

vv. 9–11. Passes away only from *immediate* observation. Can and will again 'come' within its sphere.

v. 7. (1) The Church's characteristic (after spiritual initiation, *v.* 5) is not to be Prophetic Knowledge, but 'Power'—for effort, for effect.

v. 8. (2) They are to be His 'witnesses.'—Certainty, Courage, Consistency.

v. 14. (3) They are to be 'of one mind.'

The 'Power' resides in the *whole* body (errors of Individualism, Congregationalism, Supreme Infallibility met by this fact), and the 'New Life' in the Individual only kindles in exertion with and for the rest.

(4) *v.* 14 'with women'—women's place in the world first seen by the Church.

Acts i. *vv.* 1, 2. "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the Apostles whom He had chosen."

Observe that there is here no doubt as to who 'I' was. We see throughout the Acts that whenever S. Luke is with S. Paul the author uses 'we,' when he is not there he uses 'they.'

Again, the Gospel also is dedicated to Theophilus, and S. Luke applies to him there the title 'most excellent'; but in this book written so many years later he addresses him without the title, as if they had grown more familiar.

v. 3. "To whom He also shewed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days." *Appearing*, not *being seen*; the Greek word used is not as of a person constantly in sight, but as of one coming and going: "and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." There is no record of what He said; and we shall see why presently. Although nothing could be more important, I should say rather nothing could be so important, as these things "concerning the kingdom of God," yet no more is said about them.

v. 4. "And, being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem,"—their tendency would naturally be, after Christ was gone, to break up,—"but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from me." The promise is of One who would be sent to them.

v. 5. "For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

They were to wait for the promise which would be fulfilled in their being baptized in the Holy Ghost. Here then we perceive that the old things have indeed passed away and all things become new. Baptism was no more by water only, a mere outward washing.

v. 6. "They therefore, when they were come together, asked Him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

A yearning question; He had been speaking about the kingdom of God, and they thought it had all come to pass as they had hoped.

v. 7. "And He said unto them, It is not for you" (the

Greek is 'it is not *of* you,' and this is not a scornful expression, it means, 'it is not a characteristic of you'; 'it is not yours, something else is yours') "to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority." The two words 'times' and 'seasons' do not mean the same thing; 'times' means 'periods,' 'seasons' means 'crises.' Remember that our Lord assured His disciples that He Himself did not know the times. It was in the Father's knowledge alone, neither man nor angel knew the period of this world's duration; as man, even He knew them not.

v. 8. "But ye shall receive power,"—this is what is 'of them,' to receive power,—"when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

vv. 9, 10, 11. "And when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

The place where they were was as we see in the next verse a sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. S. Luke indicates clearly where it was; not where the traditional place is, with the chapel of the Ascension; not in sight of the city where everyone could see them, moving about, but "He led them out as far as Bethany." Bethany is in a little fold of the mount Olivet, the mount folded it in. It was from there doubtless that He rose into heaven.

vv. 12, 13. "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son* of James."

The upper chamber doubtless was that so holy and so dear in its associations where last He had broken bread and drunk the wine with them, and they used it probably as their common room.

v. 14. "These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer with women"—not 'with *the* women'; the Revised Version also gives in a marginal note "with certain women" but neither word is in the original—"and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

The Life of the Lord in the Flesh before His Passion was 'a Beginning.'

Now there is no great transition from the Gospel to the Acts. What does S. Luke, who has written the most perfect gospel of the life of Jesus, say? He calls it "the beginning of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." So the doing and teaching narrated in the Gospel is only the beginning of His doing and teaching as man. He Himself said "and greater works than these shall ye do"; greater, because of the presence of the Father. He Himself estimates the things done after His death as greater things than those done in His life. S. Luke says it is the beginning; so does S. Mark in his title "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"; it is not the whole Gospel. So too says S. Paul in that passage full of mysterious beauty which touches the secret of the greatest practical power, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now know we Him no more[1]"; meaning of course that all that was known of Jesus Christ in the days on earth, is less than we know now; we know what He said and did then; and we know Him now so much better, that all that knowledge is like reading past history, for we know Him now for ourselves. There is no passage which can make us think with more reality of Christ's presence to those that love Him.

The mystery and beauty which touches us in passages of this kind is no accident. There is a fascination in things or ideas as in persons; it is one of the most strong motives of action; when we have made up our minds to do some duty, then the flashing of such an idea makes us do with passion what otherwise we should have done with dulness. So

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16.

S. Luke, S. Mark, and S. Paul speak; they 'know Him no more' because they know Him in so much higher a way. The life of Jesus Christ then goes on in the Acts. This book tells of the continuation of His life in the Church; a greater life, for which His life in the Gospels is only a preparation.

His Life goes on in Acts—His Life in, through, the Church: this is the Reality of the Church.

You perhaps do not feel or understand this, yet keep your minds open to it. What I have quoted is said by those who ought to know; the Gospel life is only the preparation for Christ's life in the Church, which is more than His life as man.

If that is so, that is the reality of the Church[1]. Some may have observed how little I have used words about the Church[2]; and I have done it on purpose, because it is not to people what it ought to be. I do not say that it is their fault, but somehow they have not realised that the life of the Church this day is the life of Jesus Christ. It must make the greatest possible difference in their view of the Church and of its life if they understand that there are things in the Church every day which are divine; and that this divinity consists in the fact that Jesus is alive,—is living, moving, speaking in men.

What comes of making the Church something else by itself. Namely dulness. We never could feel it so if Christ was Living to us. It is the point in which Satan uses good people to deceive us.

I know there are those on whom a cloud of dulness falls when the Church is talked of. There are many homes where the parents have the strongest affection for the Church, but do not impart it to the children. If I may speak of myself, I never had this dulness of feeling; and I think it is because I thought nothing about it, until I was old enough to understand. Then when I was about 14 or 15 years old it began to flash upon me in its glory. Books came out, which had a great effect on old and young. The Church came to me as it were clothed in white raiment. Also I came across books

[1] The Church includes here, and elsewhere, Laity as well as Clergy. Cf. *Christ and His Times* by Archbishop Benson, 1889, p. 152, "The Production of good is the work of the whole Church. S. Peter...calls this work the Sacrificial offering of the 'Spiritual House' or 'Pure Priesthood,' which is his name for the entire Church of Laity and Clergy."

[2] i.e. in the former course of Addresses on the Gospel according to S. Matthew, of which only fragmentary notes are preserved.

about the lives of the Saints, so that the Church came to me as she is—the Power of Christ.

But as to the children of whom I spoke—to their parents it is the same power of Christ, but it is difficult to make the children feel it so; it is impossible for the parents to bring the children up to feel it, unless they themselves are filled with the idea that the Church is the continued life of Jesus Christ. If she is not His, she is apart from Him; and if she commands religious obedience apart from Him, then she is an idol, another power than Christ's. It is then not altogether a loss, if the children turn away from this idea; for this idea sometimes dulls, and sometimes rouses a fiery spirit of fanaticism or persecution; and it does so because the Church is not seen to be one thing with Christ.

The Inquisition determined to make people think the truth. If not by persuasion then by force; if it could not make them think the truth, at any rate it determined to make them speak it, so that at least the next generation should grow up believing it. This did not leave the Church free. But in our own day the Church is free. What glory and what joy it would be if we could make our friends, our children see that Jesus Christ lives in it. Put away then the idea of dulness, for it is a delusion about the Church, and the way which Satan uses to make good people deceive others.

I shall never speak of a headless Church—of the Church as apart from Christ. If I seem to be speaking of the Church by itself, it will always be as animated by the Head, which is Christ.

Indications after His Passion of a continued Life, Presence, Direction and Revelation, slowly withdrawn.

S. Luke is the most beautiful writer of Greek in the New Testament. His words have power in them. He leads one on to see that Christ's Ascension was so ordered that it might be felt that He was not gone away. "He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days." The writer wants to make us feel the continuous life; that the death was only an incident in the life; to make us feel the continued revelation, the direction, the presence which was only slowly withdrawn, as the disciples were made used to it. As a little

child might be taught to walk, the mother's hands close to it, even when not touching it, so Christ was with the infant Church, close to it, but touching it not more than was necessary.

"He was speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." Why does S. Luke not tell us what these things were? Simply because the rest of the book is going to work it all out. The kingdom of God means the Church; sometimes the Church on earth, sometimes the Church in heaven. These things are worked out in what the Apostles *did*. He had said beforehand that He had many things to say, and that the Holy Ghost should continue His teaching.

What He said of the Kingdom of God nowhere told—why? Because it is worked out in the Action of Acts.

It is such a happy providence that we have begun this new reading on the Eve of the Ascension. To-morrow Ascension Day comes, and every word we shall hear to-morrow bears out what we have been saying. He goes from sight so that our senses cannot follow Him. As the Greek gives it us 'He was lifted on and on' and then, not a solid cloud hid Him, but a 'mist' came underneath as He was journeying; so they saw Him passing up and up, partly hidden by the mist till He was gone. There was no sudden departure, but they saw all this, saw it clearly that they might perceive He was not going to be other than He had been. Then when their gazing eyes could see no more they heard the voice of two men, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." The day is to come when He will again come back within the sphere of observation.

Ascension Day—He passes only from *immediate* observation—He can and will come within its sphere again. Gentleness of the words viz. *ἐπήρθη, ὑπέλαβεν, πορευόμενος, νεφέλη.*

vv. 7, 8. Christ has told us what should be the characteristics of the Church after the spiritual initiation. They had all been baptized with water; the baptism with the Spirit came after. 'Your characteristic,' He had said, 'shall not be what you expect; it shall not be that you will be wise, important people, with prophetic knowledge; but your characteristic is Power.'

The Church's characteristic (after spiritual initiation) is not to be prophetic knowledge but is to be (1) 'Power' *Δύναμις*, this we shall see directly and continuously. 'Demonstration of

This frees us from various delusions, from the delusion of thinking that *knowledge* is what God communicates. It

Spirit and Power'; for Effort, for Effect.

puts a stop to the Montanism which tried to bring back prophecy in the third century; or Irvingism in our own day, which is but Montanism in a new form. Montanus claimed to be a prophet, to fix those periods and crises. Holy men, in our own day, longing for our Lord's coming, believed that His advent would take place within the lifetime of certain persons; when these died that it would take place within the lifetime of the next generation, and then again during the life of the generation after that. To confide in the sign of marvellous tongues is a part of the same belief. The same delusion exists with those commentators on the Revelation who add up numbers to fix the Lord's coming. These do worse than the disciples—they not only ask the question but they answer it.

Montanism, Irvingism, Interpreters of Apocalypse and holy people otherwise who go on not only asking but answering this question of the Disciples.

But our Lord wants us to feel that this is no matter to us. To receive Power is infinitely more important to us than anything that we can know.

This is not the place to dwell on the Power; but let me remind you how S. Paul says he was not anxious to speak "with enticing words of men's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power"; to shew the Spirit powerfully. This Power we may think of under two heads, Power for Effort, and Power for Effect.

Power for Effort.

How often is it that we do not see that we are but limbs of one body. We say 'I can't rouse myself to make the effort.' If we believe Christ we shall receive power to make the effort.

Power for Effect.

And another delusion attacks us in a different way. 'I pray and nothing comes.' This too is a delusion; for power shall come to achieve the effect whether we see it or not.

(2) They are to be His "witnesses."

The second characteristic of the Church is that the members are to be His witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Has this anything to do with us still? Of course it has, because the Gospel is not yet gone to the uttermost parts of the earth: so it is to us also that Christ says it. To us —who are witnessing in what was then the uttermost part of the earth, as well as to those who then believed that they

should so witness. But the work is not done yet; there are other parts not yet visited. Are we noticing then that it is of us that He claims this witness?

It is so disagreeable to witness, so much pleasanter to be good alone, to do our ordinary duties quite quietly and feel that it is His power which makes us do them; it is so unpleasant to speak. All mankind have felt this; this is what the hermits felt when they went out of society altogether; when in the delicious climate of Egypt, where they had so few wants, they sat in the sun, thought, read, talked to those who came to see them. The same thing is true now of people in society. It is pleasanter to us all not to be witnesses; we would be Christians in heart and spirit; but 'spare us,' we say, 'this one thing, which will make some laugh, others think us hypocritical. If we put too high a standard before others and they break down because they cannot come up to it, they will blame us.'

So pleasant to be good alone without meddling; alike for Hermits *out* of Society and People '*in* Society.'

It won't do. "Ye shall be witnesses": nothing can alter it. If we will not be, Christ will die out of our souls: it is the only way in which Christ can be to us what He is ready to be. He will not, of course, be of use to others through you, if you will not witness of Him.

But 'Witnesses' you must be, if what you now know of the Christ is to be of use *to you*, as well as to others.

What is wanted of a witness? What is required in our ancient English courts? What does he swear? To speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Witnesses want Certainty, Courage, Consistency.

You must speak; you must not keep back part; you must not gloze it over.

If Christ is the source of joy and peace to you, you must tell people that He is so. If it is in His power that you resist temptation you must tell people that it is so. Certainty; courage; consistency. These are wanted in a witness; to be certain of facts; to have courage to speak; to have consistency in standing by what is spoken.

The third characteristic is that 'they were of one mind'; 'they met with one accord'; they were 'of the same mind.' Here is another characteristic of the Church. This is an uncommon word—"ὁμοθυμαδόν"—but it occurs twelve times in this one book, always in describing the Christians. We see

(3) They are to be of One mind.

The '*Power*' resides in the *Whole Body*. Errors met by this fact—Individualism, Congregationalism, Supreme Infallibility.

the tendency to it quite at first when the Christians assemble together. The power is not given to individuals but to the whole body. This runs all through, it is the whole tenor of the book—a unity of purpose. It sets aside Individualism; we are not Christians by ourselves but in concert with others. This condemns any separation of congregations by themselves with their own minister, their own sacraments. Thus Independency and Congregationalism are enemies of the Church. Such were they who built a wall across this chapel; threw out the bones of the Archbishop[1] who is buried here, not so much from badness in themselves as from a wrong theory that a number of Christians can separate themselves off from the Church with their own minister. Through Individualism we perish: Christ will not be there: nor will He be in the separated Congregation. Again this sets aside the theory of a free infallible person from whom truth streams. The power is given to the whole; resides in the whole; it is Catholic. Anything that supposes one person supreme in matters of doctrine is anti-catholic: so too anything that would separate Christians into knots—and would shut them off from each other as individuals.

This tells us how Catholic the sacred, holy, widespread doctrine of the Church of England is. Refer and see if the Church of England does not approach to the primitive Church of the first days, in hope and prayer.

One deduction may be made from this. Anyone may have this New Life; I know that many of you are yearning for it, and I am certain that you have it if you would use it. Those who believe in the Son of God, in His power and life on earth and in heaven, have it. If you do not feel it you still have it. The thought would be too awful to mention if it were not true. The life of an infant sleeping, of a person in a trance, is there, but it does not wake, it is not exerting

[1] Archbishop Parker was buried in Lambeth Palace Chapel, at his death in 1575. When the Palace was sold to two of the Puritan party in 1648, the tomb was broken open, and the bones thrown out. At the Restoration the altar tomb was re-erected, and the remains of the Archbishop were recovered and buried in front of the altar.

itself. So with some of you. But only begin to witness and you will find power to speak. Even if your clumsy, stumbling words do not express one-hundredth part of what you mean, yet speak. Begin to witness, and the New Life will wake in you, the power will begin to tell, and you will know that you have it. It will only kindle itself in exertion, otherwise it is like a fire that dies out, and no amount of rearranging then will make it burn.

The New Life kindles only in exertion with and for others. Otherwise cools, darkens, goes out.

There have been, no doubt, people who have had this new life, without thus exerting it, but in exceptional circumstances. Some of these hermits had it; but their circumstances were exceptional. It is not easy to deceive oneself about exceptional circumstances, though one tends to think self exceptional. But you will be able to tell with a little reflection whether in reality it is yours, or not. If not, there is no other way to make this New Life really yours except first to use the power; secondly to witness; thirdly to be of one heart. Put aside hardnesses, sharpnesses; speak to others, but first speak to each other.

You are a Church. And these are characteristics of the Church. Let them work themselves out in you. There is not less need now than there was then.

Women's place in the world seen and given them by the Apostolic Church.

And as to whether this touches you yourselves, look at the 14th verse—"with women." What marked this congregation was that here, at the beginning of the Church's history, women took their place. The Apostles were foremost to understand the subtle, simple power of women. Women have been and are the most powerful among the witnesses of Christ. Not among the Romans, the Greeks, or the Jews do we find this conception of the place of women. But Christ living in the flesh shewed it, and no sooner were the disciples assembled in Christ, than there were women with them.

II.

27th May, 1887.

Acts i. 15–26.

v. 15. 'The names.'

v. 18. 'Got him a little land'—The 'Bloodfield.'

v. 20. 'His overseership.'—Psalm 109. Its seeming difficulty; the execration of David's Traitor becomes the doom of Christ's Betrayer.

v. 22. The characteristic of 'Apostles.' Modern error (Irvingism) as to this point as in the matter of 'Prophets,' also *v.* 7.

v. 25. Horror with tenderness—Peter's knowledge beyond his words.

v. 21–26. The 'Power' not being yet come they look for and obtain a Material Interposition to assist their Spiritual Discretion: but never afterwards.

The reality of this 'Power' now—and how it is thrown away by us through Inconsistency—Self-Pity—Triviality—Prayerlessness.

Acts i. *v.* 15. "And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty)." The marginal note here (for we have the same translation as in the old version) gives a rendering more literal and more striking—"the number of *names* were about an hundred and twenty." This expression preserves the Old Hebrew tradition. In the Old Testament we continually find a similar use of 'name.' "I have known thee by thy name," by—that is to say, all that belongs to us here. So in the message to

the Church of Sardis, with what tenderness and power the expression comes home to us ; the careless Church is rebuked, but "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis[1] which have not defiled their garments." Each one is remembered before God as individual, known as by name. So these hundred and twenty went to and fro in Jerusalem, were known there, had homes there, but each had a special home in this upper chamber. Great things can be done by but a few names. Think of the cities of the plain—"I will not destroy it for the ten's sake[2]."

vv. 16, 17. "Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry."

In this upper chamber was gathered that apostolic ministry through which God was going to change the world ; but one was missing.

vv. 18, 19. "(Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity ; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.)"

These two verses (which are S. Luke's explanation of what S. Peter said) try to tell, in words not horrible, that horrible incident of the death of Judas. They tell it so shortly that we have to refer to other places to find that it was suicide. Notice the rhetorical touch of the Greek writer—"obtained a field with the reward of iniquity," or as the Greek is—'got him a little land.' But he was dead when he obtained it. Perhaps that was what Judas had aimed at when he got the thirty pieces of silver : there is a fearful irony in it—'He got a little land' —the priests bought it after the horrible scene which must have touched even the hearts of those who said they had nothing to do with it. They must do something with the money ;

[1] Rev. iii. 4.
[2] Gen. xviii. 32.

they could not put it into the treasury because it was the price of blood. They bought a field to bury foreigners in whom they didn't like to lay by the sacred nation of the Jews. There is a forcible irony in it, that he got a field, and he was dead when he got it—"that field was called Akeldama, that is, the field of blood." It is known for ever by that dreadful nickname—the Bloodfield[1]. It is a part of the valley of Hinnom, known now by that name; we know it because the sepulchres are found to have contained foreigners—skulls of Romans and of negroes are found there.

That is the end of [the] money-making and landed proprietorship τῆς ἀδικίας [of iniquity].

There is a parable even here—the whole history is so full of parables—that the poor stranger, the outcast in Jerusalem, slept in peace in the field bought with the price of Christ's blood.

v. 20. "For it is written in the book of Psalms,
Let his habitation be made desolate,
And let no man dwell therein:
and,
His office let another take."

'His overseership.' The words are an execration originally against David by an enemy. It seemed to have a fulfilling on David for a brief space. Then it was reversed on his enemy for ever.

We come to a difficult passage. This verse is again a part of S. Peter's speech, and the difficulty lies in the second quotation—"and 'His office let another take.'" This comes from the cixth Psalm, which I have no doubt has been a trouble to everyone. There is cursing all through the Psalm, and it seems strange that David's mouth should have been so full of cursing; but there is a real explanation of this—and we must turn aside to it for a moment, otherwise we cannot understand the passage in the Acts. The cursing is not David's cursing; the Psalm (R. V.) begins with anguish,

[1] A note here indicates an illustration drawn from the 'bloodfield' given as the reward for the betrayal of the Duke of Buckingham in the time of Richard III. £1000 was offered by the King for the apprehension of the Duke, "who had taken refuge with a follower Ralph 'Banastre' or Bannister of Lacon Hall"...who "concealed him as long as he could, and when concealment was no longer possible, claimed the reward for giving him up"..."on the 13th of December (1483) he (Bannister) received Buckingham's Manor of Yalding in Kent as his reward, also the Keepership of Everly Park." *Lancaster and York, a century of English History*, by Sir James H. Ramsay of Banff, Oxford, 1892, Vol. II. p. 506, and in notes MS. Harl. 433, ff. 37 *b* and 38.

"Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise—for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of deceit have they opened against me," "for my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer." His adversaries are many, he speaks of them as 'they' all through.

In verse 6 it is his adversaries who speak. In English we should naturally insert the word 'saying' at the end of *v.* 5. Turn over the Psalms in the Bible version and you will see that the Hebrew perpetually omits the word 'saying' where we should insert it, and gives dramatically the words of quotation, without any introduction[1].

So here. The first five verses are David's complaint about the language of his enemies—then he quotes their cursing, which he could not bear.

Then there is a pause in the Psalm, and then David says, broken in heart, "Let not this come on me but be the reward of mine adversaries," and again, "Though they curse yet bless thou," "They must go on cursing, but do thou bless." Thus all the middle part of this Psalm contains the curses of David's enemies against David. He sorrows in the first verses over his enemies' cursing, and in the last verses prays that the curses may come on those who utter them—this is of course the old Hebrew spirit.

Look now at the account of Shimei cursing David (2 Sam. xvi. 5 ff.) and you will see that some of his phrases occur here. In that account Shimei calls him "Thou man of blood," and accuses him of destroying the house of Saul. Thus it is David himself who is spoken of in the third person in these verses of the Psalm; and it is David's traitor who said—'Let the king's office be taken by another.' He wished it to be taken by the house of Saul. Thus S. Peter says 'This is a prophecy of Judas.' That is what Judas said, 'Let the king's office be taken by another,' "Whomsoever I shall kiss that is he; take him and lead him away safely." 'He set himself to be king over Israel, lead him away.' (Mark xiv. 44.)

So Judas sought to take Christ away. It was accomplished for three days. But when He 'returned in peace'

[1] This is most evident in the second Psalm, where it is the "kings of the earth" who say "Let us break their bonds asunder."

Judas was gone 'to his own place' for ever and another takes his bishopric.

Then what happened to David? He was exiled for three or six months (authorities differ) and then came back in glory; and the traitor was confined in his own house. No one saw him more in David's lifetime. So Judas said 'Let another take his office,' then for three days the kingship was taken away, and when Christ returned from exile Judas was gone to his own place. It is all fulfilled so exactly. The traitor's word was fulfilled on David for a short space, he was exiled, he returned in glory, his adversary disappeared. So Judas' words were fulfilled on Christ for three days, then Christ returned in glory and the traitor was gone. The curse of the traitor on David returned on himself, so too the curse of the traitor on Christ.

Following this truthfully and straightly, we see how S. Peter could quote this of Judas. What is the next step? One Apostle is lost. S. Peter goes on (*vv.* 21, 22) "Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Here then we have the definition of an Apostle—one who could be a personal witness of Christ, who had known Christ, had conversed with Him, had learnt the truth from Christ Himself.

S. Paul became an Apostle, but how? S. Paul tells us that he received the truth from Christ Himself; that he was called by Him, saw, not a vision, but Himself. He went out to Arabia where he remained two years and was taught of Christ Himself. He asserts it with the expression "I lie not." Then he went back to Jerusalem, and compared his knowledge of Christ with that of S. Peter and S. John, and when he conversed with them found he knew what they knew. He says the Lord Himself taught him—and that is what is demanded of an Apostle here. (Gal. i. 11, 12.)

This really gives the gist of something I spoke of last time—when I told you how an early sect mistook the cha-

racteristic of the Church—thought it was knowledge not power—and the sect which in modern times represents the same error has Apostles[1]. But there could be no more Apostles than these first chosen, for the very idea was that they should have seen Christ and been taught by Christ Himself[2].

All other orders are mentioned by S. Paul as continuing in the Church—evangelists, teachers, and the rest, but not Apostles.

vv. 23–25. "And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place."

v. 24. καρδιογνῶστα, 'heart-reading.'

This prayer gives the plan on which our collects are framed, they are based on the same principle. Notice the literal translation here. The Greek is not "fell away" but "stepped aside"—as if a beautiful company of twelve were walking together and one stepped aside to go down a by road. What horror and what tenderness there is here. The men had known each other like brothers. S. Peter can say no more than that he went "to his own place."

"Out of which Judas *stepped aside* to *walk* to *his own place.*" Horror and tenderness.

v. 26. "And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."

There is something singular in the Apostles casting lots in this way. Why should they not either choose one, or cast lots among the whole company? We have nothing of this kind when they chose the seven deacons; they were chosen and appointed quite boldly. When Saul and Barnabas were sent to preach to the Gentiles there was no casting lots.

But isn't it natural? We find here Christians applying for miraculous interposition instead of using the illumination of their own spirits, but why? because the Spirit was not yet given. After that they can use the illumination of their own

Thus they supplied the vacant throne of the fallen Apostle by union of spiritual discretion with material interposition. Never again resorted to [in Scripture records] after coming of the Holy Ghost, the Δύναμις; Stephen "full of the Holy Ghost and power." Barnabas "good man, full of the Holy Ghost."

[1] pp. 7, 8.

[2] The Archbishop no doubt intended to convey that there were no more Apostles in this primary sense; in a lesser sense cf. Book of Common Prayer, Collect for S. Barnabas the Apostle; and cf. Acts xiv. 4.

spirits. Now they go as far as they can. They use their own discretion to appoint two men, who seem to be those between whom the choice lies, and then they ask God to interpose. This incident could come in no other place.

1. Be sure you will be guided through prayer.

There is no such combination of man's discretion and God's interposition elsewhere. Now that we believe that God will answer and illuminate our spirits by prayer, it is this that we must look to. We have no right to ask for miraculous interposition. We have no right to open the Bible and let the eye fall on a passage and ask God so to interpose. John Wesley describes with anguish the last time he tried this. Being in great distress he opened his Bible and his eye fell on a passage of wrath. He felt this was no answer, unless indeed it were an answer to teach him to do so no more; and he never did. It is unchristian to use any material means of finding out God's will, and unfaithful to do so rather than pray God to enlighten our souls. We have thousands of promises in the Bible that our minds shall be enlightened by the Holy Ghost if we will throw ourselves upon Him. If we go on praying light will come. So it is interesting to see that when the Apostles are parting with the old life and are on the threshold of the new they do both. They go as far as their discretion will carry them, then they ask God in His mercy to guide them as to the rest, and He does guide them. It is only here in the whole history of Christianity that this could happen.

2. If when He promises aid *through* our spirit we seek to material circumstance we must expect to be deceived.

—People find themselves to have Δύναμις when they begin to speak after prayer. They know there is Δύναμις because their speech has so much more power than they expect it to have or find it fit to have.

Now we have power to say in the simplest way, This power and illumination is given to you. This is truth and God's truth is pledged to you. But He does require you to use it. It does not matter if you feel a difficulty beforehand in trying to win souls for Him; if you do it in a clumsy halting manner; all this doesn't matter if you do your best. He does not ask you to do it with skill and tact. Not but that you will do it with skill and tact, only not enough to please yourselves. But if, wishing to come up to this standard, you will not speak till you can do so, this is not of God. S. Paul says God has not chosen the wise, the rich or the noble, but the weak and the foolish things—and to this

experience testifies. The Cross of Christ was the ugliest, most reproachful thing on which the eye could rest. It is not so with us, it has gained new power, has become a beautiful sign. But it was not so to the Greeks; it was merely a gibbet. S. Paul says God has chosen this thing, a mark of weakness, a repulsive thing, "unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." We must put together these things; Christ says He will send power, S. Paul says that the Cross is power. It is not difficult. The Cross must come before the Holy Ghost could come. We must not think to do this work by skill and tact.

Evidence of S. Paul 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.

'May I do it, then, without reflection? May I say to the first I meet, "How is your soul?"' No; the careless must at least do his best. It is dreadful for instance to see a clergyman go up to his pulpit, who says he has not prepared, he is going to speak to the people as God shall guide him. God indeed uses the foolish and weak if they are as strong as man can make them, but He doesn't turn carelessness and coldness into power. Do as well as you can, and be sure then that God will make up your shortcomings. You speak in His power, not your own. To be witnesses implies some suffering, but the certainty of strength. It requires certainty, courage, consistency to speak the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth.

Fearful mistake of taking less pains than we could on that account. God blesses our *best*, even when most limited, not our carelessness or idleness.

You are to be μάρτυρες. Suffering and promise.

We saw last time that we must not speak of the Church by herself, but of the living Church with Christ her Head; I am sure that the feeling of dulness comes from not grasping this idea. Then we saw that the promise of God is not knowledge but power. To illustrate this, think of some poor person whose heart is thoroughly given to God. What wise words such people speak, what clear insight they have; they speak without knowledge, but with power.

The new life is in you, I said. Our hope is that it may burn up, to be the joy of those who have it—not die out and leave them cold. But it must be kindled by speech with others, by making them sharers of the new life. It is easy

People refuse to be

μάρτυρες, and sacrifice 'power,'

to refuse to be a witness without making up one's mind to do so, by merely not witnessing till the time is past. This is a sacrifice of the power which God has given. The last words of Christ are "ye shall receive power, and ye shall be my witnesses,"—shall receive power to be witnesses. And how easily this power is thrown away through disuse, through inconsistency.

For instance, a mother may desire her children to be truthful; she lets the child know through her own acts and those of others how precious truth is. Then in an unguarded moment, or when she is hard pressed, she utters a conventional falsehood. It doesn't wound her conscience, for it is the language of convention, but it does wound the little soul who listens. The mother, who loves truth, has let herself be driven by circumstances into what is not truth; the child perceives that there are circumstances in which the mother he so much admires does not witness to the truth; circumstances in which she witnesses to something else. That is throwing away power. There is no power greater than that of a mother, who is consistent, over her child. Inconsistency is destructive of power.

1. When they are inconsistent.

2. Self-bemoaning puts away Δύναμις,

There is another way of throwing away power. Bemoaning oneself—complaining of the worry and harass of the life we have to lead, revenging ourselves on what we have to do by self-pity.

If we have a life to lead it is prepared by God. If we complain we are judging God, speaking ill of that which He appointed; complaining that He gives us a task without the strength to do it; but 'thy strength is sufficient for thy day.' He who gives the call, gives strength to fulfil the call. This complaint too is flinging away power. On the other hand, to be confident God will not give us more than we are able to do, gives us more and more strength.

so does

3. Triviality—jest at a duty, at a self-denial —refusal to feel,

Triviality is another way—jesting at duties, at the eagerness with which some one does his duty, exercises self-denial; refusing to feel the sharpness of God's dealing with us; braving out sorrow or loss—not owning that it is of God, that it is hard to bear, and that we bear it in His strength—but

acting as if we bore it in our own strength and could trifle with it—all this is loss; this is flinging away power—resting on the stubbornness of our own nature instead of being willing and ready to own our dependence on God.

4. Anxiety less for self than for children or servants.

Again when people see that we are more anxious about our children being good than we are about being ourselves good; when we would not tell stories in the presence of the children, but do not object to listen and tell such when they are not near; when our desire for holiness for them is greater than for ourselves—so that we begin the morning prayerlessly, instead of opening our hearts in their freshness and strength to God. We begin with our news and our letters, finishing the things left half undone the night before, thinking we will get prayer and read the Bible presently, though we know it is difficult to do so at any other hour. Each day we think perhaps shall be the last of this weak habit, but in spite of experience we allow it to continue just this day. When this is so, it is to little purpose that Christ has said "Ye shall be endued with power from on high." Take the hour and moment when you can receive power and resolve this day to be better witnesses than ever before.

5. Mornings without prayer, ἐσχάρα ἄθυτος, dry up 'power.'

Next Sunday[1]—what does it commemorate? The giving power from God which transforms the mind and heart and spirit, and makes us able to discern things. Let us pray more earnestly than ever before God's altar that He will pour out His Holy Spirit, His *Δυνάμις*, on the few names that He has numbered.

[1] Whitsunday.

III.

17th June, 1837.

Acts ii. 1–21.

The promised 'Power' comes with Nature's own signs of Power:

v. 2, 3. with Universal signs. THE WIND; mysterious certainties of Movement. THE FIRE; 'Boldness,' 'Fervent Zeal.' SPEECH to infinite minds and hearts.

v. 5, 6. The Signs arrest *all* kinds of persons.

The 'Power' moulds most unexpected persons into witnesses.

v. 13. *Interpretations.* The *low* interpretation inevitable.

v. 15–21. The real interpretation by the Prophet.

Do we rightly interpret our own position? Sympathy of a nation for those who do. Passive goodness nearly useless, soon impossible. The 'Power' is for "*all* flesh"—"*your* daughters"—"*your* young men"—"*your* old."

Do we interpret position of clergy rightly? 'Social deadlock' need not come, though near—time available.

ii. 1—4. "And when the day of Pentecost was now come," that day 49 days after Easter, "they were all together in one place." Here we get again that beautiful word we noticed before, "ὁμοθυμαδόν," meaning 'all together,' 'with one mind,' or 'with one heart.' This word is a key to many passages, and so it is here. "And suddenly there came from heaven a

sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them." Here we have a great gain in the new translation. There appeared a radiance above them, and from it darted to each head a tongue of fire. There did not appear cloven tongues merely—but the glory of God parted to each his own fire.

vv. 4—11. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

"Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God."

Glance at the map and see how these lands are taken one after the other as they circle round Jerusalem; first those near, then those further off, and finally the most outlying nations, Cretes and Arabians.

vv. 12—15. "And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day."

If worldly men would be ashamed of being drunken at the third hour of the day, it is not likely that the disciples, who had just seen Jesus crucified, would be drunken.

vv. 16–21. "But this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel;

> And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
> I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
> And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
> And your young men shall see visions,
> And your old men shall dream dreams:
> Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
> Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
> And I will shew wonders in the heaven above,
> And signs on the earth beneath;
> Blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:
> The sun shall be turned into darkness,
> And the moon into blood,
> Before the day of the Lord come,
> That great and notable *day*:
> And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The promised 'Power' comes with Nature's Signs of Power.

See how beautifully the passage of Joel comes in, in the lines of the Hebrew poetry. The disciples had had the promise of power, and the power came. We see the working out of this from point to point; and now we have the actual coming of the power. It came with all the signs of Nature's power. If we think over and remember all such signs, we shall see that they are all things which God has made, and taken as symbols of something more.

Compare the Evangelic Creatures of the Apocalypse; and the Water, the Bread and Wine.

Think of what the prophets and S. John tell us about the throne of God. In the Revelation (as in Ezekiel) it is as the blue hemisphere of heaven, resting on four mighty creatures; and above the hemisphere something not clearly seen, like jasper and the sardis stone. And he describes the appearance of the creatures; one has a head like an eagle, another like a lion, another like an ox, and the fourth like a man. These

are four great signs of the development of God's power in the living creation: the heaven-soaring eagle, leaving the earth beneath his feet, soaring towards the sun whose brightness is not too great for him; then the passive, magnificent strength of the bull; and the lion, with strength of a different sort; and finally the image of human kind. These are four symbols setting forth the power of God. Again, to take another instance, in baptism our Lord consecrated water as a symbol; and in the Holy Communion He took the bread and wine the food of man as symbols. Thus here the Holy Spirit is symbolised by wind—and in this we have the most characteristic touch that any poet could give when we remember our Lord's own words, "thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth[1]." Consider the mysterious certainty, and the power of it—certainty but mysterious to us, for we do not know where it will be for two hours together—an unutterable power. All we know scientifically of it only deepens the mystery, all makes it fitter to symbolise the power of the Spirit. We do not know when we may be affected by it in a more marked manner than usual; the quiet way of working is described as 'the Spirit dwelling in us.' But here the Spirit came with the signs of power—with glory and light crowning every head, every brow crowned with power, giving boldness to go into the world and teach all nations.

Universal Signs—*The Wind*—Movement—Certain, Mysterious.

Science does not diminish the lesson.

Then again Fire consumes impurities and weakness. There is an awful passage in which the Apostle describes the work of the ministers of Christ and how the fire will try it. All weak, impure things will be burnt out—if a man has worked honestly he will be saved, but he will have the trouble of seeing all he laboured at consumed. This is what the Holy Spirit will do for every one. He will consume all that is impure and weak if He has His own glorious way and we do not quench the fire. Think of S. Paul's other awful expression, "Quench not the Spirit[2]."

The Fire: 'Boldness,' 'Fervent Zeal': consumes impurities, consumes weakness.

Then there is the other sign more marvellous still, the

[1] Jo. iii. 8. [2] 1 Thess. v. 19.

The Speech: to infinite minds and hearts.

gift of speech which could fall on every ear in the language it was fittest to listen to. The account does not say whether they all, the men, the women (perhaps the Virgin with them) spoke all these different languages, or whether they spoke each in a different language, or whether they all spoke the praises of God and it fell differently on each ear, and the miracle therefore was worked on those hearing it. In any case, it comes to the same thing, that they were so moved by the Spirit that everyone received the sound most fitted to him. This gift came then to a great number, moving not only the intellect but the emotions also. Now, if you think of it, the gift that came to each did not do what I know you are afraid that this gift of the Spirit will do. It did not put all who received it on a dead, dull, passive level of goodness, or even of good intentions, but it gave to each the power for his own work, and to those who listened it gave what each of them wanted.

ὁμοθυμαδόν, διαμεριζόμεναι, no dead level, each is still each, work, government, winning, counselling, silent sympathy, clearing difficulties, injecting thought.

It does so still to the people who listen when you bear your witness, as you will do, as you are doing. And to you, in the power of government, if that is the gift of one, or in the sweet manners which may be the gift of another, or the affecting way of putting things—the Spirit will use all these. One may be wise, and this gift of counsel which is by nature will be taken and made divine; so too with the power of sympathy which another may have.

One of my dearest friends[1], whom God took away last year, had more influence at Cambridge than any one I ever knew. He has often established himself as a helper with men in a moment, and sometimes in a moment bound men to him for life. None knew what bound them to him first. But one told me that while at college he had lost his mother. He made an attempt to bear up manfully against this sorrow, but he was quite broken by it, and he came back to college and was going up to his room when he met this friend of mine. He was afraid of meeting him, shrank from having to stay and talk. My friend did not stop him, but as he

[1] Henry Bradshaw, Cambridge University Librarian, died 1886.

passed quite quietly he just took his hand and said, "I understand." It changed that man's life.

Let not any then think that their sympathy will be lost because they find it so hard to speak it.

Others have the power of clearing intellectual difficulties out of the way—a task which some do not even attempt. They have the power to give quickly some thought which the person who is troubled will find clear up his difficulties—not by battling from point to point, but by giving a principle on which the thinker may think the case out for himself.

There is no trouble so insignificant but there is help to be found for it, and some one of these signs—the fire with its light or heat, the sound, whether of the wind or of the voice of man—is sufficient at any rate to arrest attention.

The signs arrest all kinds of persons: businesslike, ritualistic, simple; all those national characteristics.

The feast which was being celebrated at Jerusalem was a joyous feast, the feast of firstfruits. The people came from all parts of the world to it, but the different nations were perfectly distinct from one another. It will not be grotesque to parallel this account of the nations passed away by illustrating it from the nations living now. It would be as if we were to string together Germans, Italians, negroes, Americans, colonists. These are not more diverse than those were, are not more possessed of their own characteristics. They are even less so, for those nations mentioned in the Acts did not adopt the costumes of any other country but prided themselves on their own nationality. Every one of those people then, out of these different nations, knew that the people gathered there together, whom they heard speaking in their own languages, knew more of God than they had ever heard before. And these people, who had become eloquent so suddenly, were Galilaean peasants. "Are not all these which speak Galilaeans?"

The 'Power' moulds unexpected people into witnesses. Galilaeans eloquent.

To call them Galilaeans was not so complimentary as it would be to call a man a 'Londoner' for example. For the Galilaeans were rude, half-cultivated men, who lived as much crowded together as the people in our worst manufacturing districts. Whenever a rebellion broke out Galilaeans had something to do with it. Galilee was the most unsatisfactory

province, for the people were thoroughly unsophisticated and single-hearted. Now what does this shew? This namely—what very unexpected people are made to be witnesses of God; and it is just as likely He should take the most polished, cultivated people as that He should take Galilaeans. There is a finish which does not harden people's hearts, and there is a kind of finish which does harden them very much. But that is nothing when the Wind and the Fire and Speech are given for the work. It may be as unexpectedly to ourselves as to anyone else that we are turned to the work.

What man standing outside Wesleyanism has had a greater influence on it than the writer of some of their earliest hymns, John Newton, the great preacher, the great helper known all over England? He was the captain of a slave ship, and was below in a cabin writing his journal, when God called him[1]. Who was the man who, when he was asked to stop the missionaries, said, "What does the Commander-in-chief say? 'Go ye to all nations.'" That was the Duke of Wellington.

You have seen then what different people have become witnesses; and if this power of speaking to people's hearts were to come to you would you not welcome it?

To witness is possible to all who give up themselves. 'Somebody *else* must do it.' 'Somebody must do it—why not I?'

Who could seem more unlikely than the Blessed Virgin to become the mother of our Lord? She thought so herself, but when the angel told her what God meant for her, her words shew that she did not understand; but what more do they mean? 'I cannot understand, but I must not wish

[1] John Newton (1725–1807) was the son of a merchant skipper, went to sea on his father's ship, was impressed into the navy, deserted, was arrested and flogged. Released from the navy he joined the service of an African slave-dealer. He became a slave-dealer himself and says "he never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion than on his two last voyages to Guinea." He took an aversion to the slave trade, and the episode related above occurred on his last voyage. He desired to take Holy Orders in 1758 and was refused by the Archbishop of York, but in 1764 was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Lincoln, and became a priest the next year. While curate of Olney he became a great friend of Cowper, and the Olney Hymns were published in 1779, the same year that he became Rector of S. Mary Woolnoth. The piety and Evangelic preaching of Newton allied him closely with the sentiments of Wesley, and the Olney Hymns were adopted by the Wesleyan Methodists, though few now remain in use.

to understand; be it unto me according to thy word.' All who surrender themselves to the Lord are able to witness; it will not make their life less in anything, but full of peace and joy. If we would give ourselves up to the influence of the Holy Spirit instead of telling us to do this or that thing He would fill us full of the power which would enable us to do all.

The *low* interpretation inevitable. Don't imagine you avoid that.

But this glory and power and joy does not come without its drawbacks. Is not this characteristic of what happens now, and here in England, that people, seeing the happiest and most glorious thing on earth, will put a low interpretation on it? A voice breaks out, 'these men are drunken.'

This very same accusation was made against the early Christians for a long time. In Cyprian's letter in the year 253 we find that the Christians could not bear to take wine in the Holy Sacrament, as they had to take it so early in the morning, and men said they smelt of wine, and had been revelling[1].

It is good for us to remember that however changed the world is, its principles of action remain the same. Cyprian had to write to these Christians a beautiful letter, in which he says that if they give this up they will have to give up one thing after another in obedience to the voice of the world.

Here in Jerusalem the accusation came out at once. So in England, if any persons make a noble effort against evil, a low motive is instantly attributed to them. They cannot trim their sails so as to avoid it. Do then what is according to your own peace and let them say what they will.

The real interpretation of the Prophet by the *present fact*. No Jew could have read that passage in Joel without asking the question 'Is *this* about Locusts? "notable day"!' It was answered by the fact.

We are tempted to think that matters of fact are less romantic than things we invent. But contrast the world's voice with the real interpretation. This event in Jerusalem was prophesied by Joel many years before. After speaking of the plague of locusts that had come (or was coming) the prophet speaks of the service held to pray God to deliver the land. But the Jew could not read further, for we come to the passage (in the last chapter of Joel), "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon

[1] Cypr. *Ep.* 63. Cf. *Cyprian*, by Archbishop Benson, 1897, p. 289 ff.

all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel ii. 28). No Jew could read this without asking himself 'what has this to do with the locusts?' The prophet is passing on to something greater.

A parallel instance we find in Acts viii. when Queen Candace's nobleman is reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and comes with amazement to the passage "he was led as a sheep to the slaughter." He had read what the prophet says about his own time and understood it; but now he looks up with delight when he sees a person, who by his dress should be ready to explain it. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" he asks, and Philip explains the way in which the prophets pass from events of their own time to greater things which shall be. So in the book of Joel the Jew must have felt that Joel, by the Spirit of the Lord, passed on here to something greater; and S. Peter shews to what he passed on. After refuting the low interpretation, he says, 'turn now to Joel and you will see this written. Less than seven weeks ago was the sign of darkness given. As Joel says, "the sun shall be turned into blood"; and this is followed by the pouring out of the Spirit upon the servants and handmaids, on the despised Galilaeans.' Thus S. Peter says, 'the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled in your ears. Believe now in the Lord, and the gift of the Spirit shall be poured out on you also.'

They interpreted their position at once. Positions get askew.

There is one thing you must notice about prophecy. With one exception, prophecy is never consciously worked out[1]. Its application is not seen until it is fulfilled. Prophecy is only verified in the event. Thus there was nothing to be said in answer to S. Peter when he said, 'you did not know what this passage meant, but see if the Spirit is not poured out now and the sign given.' Three thousand persons could not deny it. Thus S. Peter *interprets* the position.

There is need of witnesses to interpret your own position rightly.

Now witnesses are those who have learnt to interpret. Why are the lower classes separated by jealousy from those above? Because they don't understand the position of those

[1] Jo. xix. 28.

above, and no one can interpret it but those who fill the position. Centuries ago there was no doubt about these positions—a Duke was a Dux—a leader; a Marquis had the command of the Marches; there was no jealousy then, for the position was well understood.

But this is all changed by the progress of events. The positions are more difficult to understand and to interpret. But it can be done; and the sympathy of the nation will be with those who explain their position, not with those who renounce it. We are not to renounce riches and position but to use them. There never was a more disgraced position and name than that of Philip of Orleans. In shewing people what our position is we are only doing what the Apostles did. They did not sit down under the accusation and accept the mean calumny, but they came forward and refuted it. People are more ready to think good than evil, they will rejoice when you use your position rightly.

The sympathy of the nation is with those who make their position *clear*, not with those who renounce it.

An investigation has lately been made into the means of living in the worst part of London. The result was found to be better than one feared. There were about 65 per cent. above the line of poverty, 22 per cent. on the line, and 13 "falling chronically below it into the region of distress." The writer of the report draws the moral that social revolution is not at our doors as one sometimes feared[1]. But if causes should arise which increase poverty we should be in danger of revolution. Wage earners are helpless. People cannot raise their wages, the force of competition settles that; it will not do for the rich to pauperise them or for the legislature to fix a scale of wages. And when we come to take this 13 per cent. who are below the line of poverty we find we cannot get them good places, they have not intellect enough to keep work when they get it; the low mental and physical condition is owing to the base habits of their parents and themselves. Here we put our finger on the spring of the evil—the base habits. If you would remedy all, this is the point.

'Social deadlock' is still extricable. There is time to make an impression. Revolution is not on the doorstep.

Shall this 13 per cent. increase? Causes at work to make it.

[1] *Conditions and Occupations of the People of the Tower Hamlets*, by Charles Booth, 1886—1887.

And this is why the Holy Spirit came. All our organisation ought to be directed to lift up the habits of the people; to give them a great ideal.

But some of ourselves sink to these base habits, and their posterity will sink, and they ruin the character of the class.

We see how the people were all touched by the Holy Spirit, that He spoke to all in their own language. Have we not need to labour when we know this, and when we see that there are those in our own circles who through base habits become parents of such debased creatures as these; when we see that it is the profligacy of England which brings this 13 per cent. below the line of poverty; have we not need to pray for the Wind, the Fire, the Speech, to help to keep us from that which is causing this volcano below, so to restrain this profligacy? if we can do it England will be happy; but if not, she will not.

Now you can bear witness to them of a 'Power,' and they will witness (with you) to Poor.

Is this alien to our reading to-day?

No. "I will pour out my Spirit on *all* flesh; and *your* sons and *your* daughters shall prophesy, *your* young men see visions"—they arise, are active—"your old men *dream* dreams" of what is to come and of how it is to come.

IV.

1st July, 1887.

Acts ii. 22–43.

S. Peter proceeds—'That utterance of the prophet, and other antient existing records, are explicable only by the now well-known life of Jesus:—'

[*v.* 23. Wickedness used by God. *All* said or done is God's material.]

'This History and explanation must now be carried a point further; HE was not only slain but HE ROSE.'

'Take now the earliest, hitherto dark saying which says as much; viz. *Psalm* xvi.'—the first distinct statement of immortality.

"David"—not the historic David, who has not fulfilled this—compare Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24; Jer. xxx. 9; Hos. iii. 5.

v. 26. Flesh shares soul's confidence—*not* these particles.
(A Lesson in the use of the Psalter.)

vv. 37, 38. (*a*) Conviction, Repentance (Metanoia), Baptism, Remission, Gift of Holy Ghost, and

v. 42. (*b*) Christian *teaching*, Christian Life and Feeling, Holy Communion, United Devotions.

All came A.D. 30 into existence at once for ever.

v. 43. The signs of the Presence continue. What He did they do, and we?

Recapitulation. We spoke last time of the importance of the interpretation of positions. The clergy have sometimes a difficulty in interpreting their position; and in some cases it is even improper for them to do so. No one too can interpret his own position alone, but it must be interpreted

by others also. Thus it is specially the duty of those who help the clergy to help them to interpret their position—to interpret it for instance to the poor, who have strange imaginations about the clergy and why they do their work. There are none more helpless than the clergy, since it is often improper, as I said, for them to interpret their own position. And it is true that in many cases the position of the clergy is not interpreted as it ought to be by those who can do so. People like you often make the clergy feel that you will only help them on condition that you take everything into your own hands. Now the clergy are appointed to their work; the appointment comes down from the Apostles without a break. The appointment is not from the congregation. This fact I always tell the clergy not to dwell upon to their congregations. 'It may be a great comfort to you,' I tell them, 'if you doubt whether you have been called, as all must doubt sometimes. You may feel sometimes that you are failures, and that you could not stand at all if you were not able to throw yourselves back on the thought that you are appointed by God; that you are appointed from the outside as well as by the inward call to the heart. This inward call you might question; but the historical fact you cannot question. You can cast yourselves back on this then, but never dwell on it to the laity. This historical fact is a strength to yourselves, but rest nothing on it in speaking to others. It is for others to find out that you have a divine mission by the divine words you speak and the divine things you do.'

Now many benevolent people take things in hand in their parishes as if there was no one sent from God to do the work. It is the sharpest nail in the heart of a sincere clergyman who feels himself to be a failure, that good people treat him as if he were unable to deal with anything, that they treat him as if he were not called. You ought to reinforce the cause of the clergy. They ought not to be expected to be wiser than other people, except in that wisdom which God gives them for their special work. That trial of which I speak no special gift will enable them to withstand. There is a book in everybody's hand now which describes the poverty, ignorance

and wickedness of a certain district in London, and mentions as the only people who are doing good there a certain small sect which it names; whereas in this place, as I know, the most devoted and laborious clergy have been at work for years. People come and go and help all but the clergy. South London is beginning to cry out. I was reading a paper the other day which says that if South London is not cared for, if we attend to East London only, the voice of the South will break out in a very unexpected way. This paper is not written with temper or with tact, but there is truth in it. And here, in South London, people will not come to work from the West end, although they will go to the East, and are even waiting in connection with different churches till work can be found for them to do. They might undertake to help this pressing need and make Christ felt in this dark area; but there is so curious a fashion in religious things as well as in others, that the wind blows—even with those who have sympathy and affection—all one way, and whole districts are left destitute.

You must bear with me if I have spoken strongly of the relation to the clergy of those who might help them[1]. God gives you life to take into these districts. It will run more strongly through established channels, especially those of God's making, than if it spreads over a wide area undirected.

v. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know."

"Jesus of Nazareth." S. Peter has not spoken of our Lord before, he has only quoted Joel. Then he pauses a moment and resumes thus: "as ye yourselves know." I am telling you, he says, what has gone on before your own eyes.

v. 23. "Him[2], being delivered up by the determinate

[1] Cf. pp. 63, 64.

[2] There is a pause before this verse for a grammatical reason. The Greeks were very fond of using relative pronouns, and therefore a new subject often begins with a relative where we should use a demonstrative pronoun; this form enabled them to put things more vividly.

counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay": 'this is all,' S. Peter might add, that 'most of you know about it,' for the Resurrection was secret, and after that He was seen of chosen witnesses only. Therefore of the three thousand (*v.* 41) many would know nothing else of our Lord.

S. Peter proceeds, 'That utterance of the prophet and many another antient record in our hands have had an unexpected but unquestionable light thrown on them by the Life of Jesus —led in your presence— [the utterances are] fitted by It alone.'

But S. Peter goes on to tell them something which they did not know. They had known of His death, but the Resurrection was news to them.

v. 24. "Whom[1] God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." This is still news to them.

Proceeds, 'Well now this has to be carried a point further: you did not (as a nation) see the last of that History, for HE ROSE from the dead'—(this proveable elsewhere).

v. 25. "For David saith concerning Him, I beheld the Lord always before my face...that I should not be moved." The Psalms are quoted perpetually, but if one tries to read them, or other parts of the Old Testament, dramatising them, putting oneself in the place of a person reading them before Christ had come, one will find that there are great tracts of which one can make nothing, any more than the Ethiopian treasurer could make anything of Isaiah's prophecy. A well-instructed child, now, hearing that chapter of Isaiah for the first time, would know it to be a description of our Lord, though when it was written it was also a description of someone else, who was a type of our Lord. But the Ethiopian was quite lost, and when he was asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" he asks, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" If you refer you will see this makes the whole difference in the meaning of the passage (cf. Is. liii.).

'But now do these same unexplained antient records contain anything about *this* also?' For they are unexplained hitherto. Take the very earliest, the dawn [of the hope].

Thus too there are long passages of the Psalms which are descriptions of David or others, but are written so that a person reading them would say that he could not understand how David could realise this; as for example, that someone 'should be for ever,' 'should never die.' At the most such a reader might say, as the Rabbis say now, "He speaketh of the days of Messiah."

[1] Again, if S. Peter was speaking in English, he would start afresh with *v.* 24.

S. Peter quotes from the Psalms the first passage (Ps. xvi.) which speaks of the Resurrection. 'Jesus rose from the dead,' he tells them, 'You only know that He died; but this, one of the dark passages in the Psalms, tells you that God ordered all this ages before.' This Psalm shews the dawn of the hope of Resurrection, and it ought to be dear to any of us who have any dear one on the other side, or to anyone who looks forward to the time when he himself shall cease to speak and think. It is throughout all prophecy the first expression of the belief that life is not over with death. That would be a great thing if that were all; but it is not all.

E.g. 'David says he shall not see corruption,' but he *did*. The historic David did not *fulfil* his record, was not yet 'born from the dead,' much less was he 'the First-born from the dead,' who 'saw' change, 'not decay'; but this is One who is *called* 'David.'

S. Peter gives a lesson on the interpretation of Scripture; if we master it it will make the Psalter a new book to us. We have heard of a lesson in the use of the Psalter before, but it is not recorded; only we are told that in the walk to Emmaus Christ drew near to the disciples and explained to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And we see that the Prophets and Psalms became a new book to those who heard Him, for they said, "Did not our heart burn within us?"

So that S. Peter makes this an Early Lesson for us in use of Psalter.

So there had been a lesson before, and may we not think that S. Peter was now repeating Christ's lesson?

At any rate this is the first passage of prophecy about the hope of Resurrection; and if we read it carefully we shall find in a moment that it describes something besides our own resurrection. There is no man of whom this could be said but One; it will apply in its fulness to Him alone who is to all the cause of resurrection to the "Firstborn from the dead." For David said (*v.* 26), "Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced"; 'I had the presence of my God through life,' he implies, "moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope"; the bodily principle shall rest 'in security'—if we understand it rightly. Not only would the heart feel the presence of God, but would know that the body which had been its partner and tabernacle all its days, should rest in security. So, parallel to the words about the body (*v.* 27), "thou wilt not leave my *soul* in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One

'My flesh also shall rest in security, sharing the soul's confidence'—not the 'flesh' of present particles—but the principle.

to see corruption." Here is the power of the Resurrection for all, but there is a touch beyond what can be said of any of us; it is of the Head of our race that it is said He 'shall not see corruption.' This is spoken of His Resurrection.

Then we come to the last verse, *v.* 28, "Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance." Then S. Peter goes on in the same delicate, gentle way that marks his Epistle, and marks also his mention of Judas.

v. 29. "Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David" (great as is your reverence for him as a divine teacher), "that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day." So the prophecy was not fulfilled in him. David spoke of himself indeed, but he follows it up by another touch which he cannot have referred to himself when he says, "thy Holy One," cf. *vv.* 30, 31.

David was a figure so important in the revelation of God that Christ Himself is called David. Long years after David was dead God said, "David my servant shall be their shepherd"; and again, "David my servant shall be a prince among them." David then was so great that his name was taken for the Messiah. And he, being a prophet, knew that in his direct line would be born that Holy Thing, who was born of the Royal Virgin, by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost. In speaking then of his own certainty of Resurrection, he speaks here (as of his child) of Him by whom the Resurrection would begin, who would be the cause of Resurrection to all men.

Now having laid before them this passage S. Peter goes back, 'This Jesus was David's son, He was laid in the grave, but He saw no corruption.'

vv. 30–32. "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne; he foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses."

v. 33. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted,

and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."

"Whereof we all are witnesses" (*v.* 32), pointing to many, right and left, for 500 had seen Him after His Resurrection as well as the Apostles (1 Cor. xv. 6). 'These are ready,' he implies, 'to make deposition before you.'

v. 34. "For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet."

v. 35. "Unto my Lord," 'to Him who is at once my son and my Lord.' This is the question remember which Christ put before the Pharisees, how David could call Him at once son and Lord (Matt. xxii. 45 etc.).

v. 36. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

This passage is scarcely intelligible in the ordinary version, but the Revised Version puts it clearly.

v. 37. Now, when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

v. 38. "And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

With regard to these verses I will give you for each sentence a characteristic word.

v. 37. "What shall we do?"—Conviction.

v. 38. "Repent ye"—Repentance.

"And be baptized"—Baptism.

"Unto the remission of your sins"—Forgiveness of sins.

"And ye shall receive"—the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

(*a*) Conviction, Repentance (Μετάνοια), Baptism, Remission, Gift of Spirit.

I spoke before of the glorious Greek word for repentance, *μετάνοια*, 'change of mind'—the stream which had been flowing towards Satan turns and flows to God.

But see how far we are getting in the doctrine of the Christian Church—Conviction, Repentance, Baptism, Forgiveness, the Gift of the Holy Spirit. All these are proposed by S. Peter without reserve.

vv. 39–42. "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him. And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

(*b*) Christian Teaching, Christian Life and Feeling, Holy Communion, United Devotions, all come into activity at once, A.D. 30, and are ours still, all essentials, none which we have not in our Church.

We have already proceeded a long way and see now, A.D. 30, just after the Ascension of Christ, how the Church began to crystallise. Notice the four cardinal points in *v.* 42: (1) the Apostles' teaching and doctrine, that is, the understanding of the Scriptures, bringing in light to heart and life; all this is included; (2) the fellowship or communion; (3) the breaking of bread—we know what that is; (4) "the prayers," the common prayers of the Church, not 'prayer.' Is there one of these notes of the Church wanting in our Church? or is there one point mentioned here which the Roman Catholic Church holds and we do not? Not one. The Apostles' converts were not taught any of those distinctive doctrines which the Romanists teach as necessary.

But how many mysteries we have passed over in these verses! We will return to *v.* 23.

v. 23. "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay."

The wickedness of men was used by God. Their wickedness could not originate in God, it was against God, yet God used it, and the result is spoken of as done 'by His counsel and foreknowledge.' The wickedness of the Jews was working out what Christ was before prepared to suffer. So our wickedness must be building up God's plan. There is nothing in the world but is material which God uses.

All that is said or done is God's material. Fear-

He deals with it as He has to deal, and works it into His holy purposes. And so our own acts may come into God's eternal work, and we ourselves may not be there. The wickedness of the Jews worked out the sacrifice of Christ in which they had no part.

ful thought, We *do* it, and we are not in it. "We can do nothing against but for the truth."

Put it thus. Man was made in the image of God. A hundred passages, as "the Lamb" "foreknown...before the foundation of the world," made to be the type of humanity, make us feel that even if man had not fallen the Son of God would still have become man; and our race could then have been carried at once to a holy consummation.

His plan was to raise man by an Incarnation. [But] Man sins. Then it is a sorrowful Incarnation, it is Sacrificial Incarnation subject to death.

But man did sin, and God did not change His purpose. Then He might have cast us off. It was a divine grace that God should take the nature of innocent man, but when he ruined himself would God keep His eternal purpose?

He did so, but it was necessary that His Son should suffer death, the penalty of man's sin; and the Son of God was ready to die in whatever way it should be worked out. It was worked out by the wickedness of the Pharisees. If man had not sinned He would have kept the eternal purpose without suffering, but He did keep it with suffering as we willed to have it so. We chose *how* it should be done.

Sin performs the Sacrifice joyfully.

v. 24. "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."

Then the Resurrection of man had begun in the First-begotten from the dead; and we too shall be raised—not these very particles which are changed hour by hour, so that we cannot at any given point say 'this is my body': but the soul has in it some principle by which it clothes itself; and thus S. Paul speaks of the time when we shall not be unclothed but clothed upon. It is not the laying down of the body which the soul desires. This is a philosophy on which Science casts, as it grows, little by little, more light.

When the people knew of sin repented of, of Baptism, of the Gift of the Holy Ghost—all of which is ours; when they had bound themselves together in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship—all of which is ours; then "fear came upon

every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles."

The signs of His *Presence* continue—what He did, and they did, do we? Cast out evil spirits? Heal soul sickness?

Is not that our hope of strength this day? If we repent, receive Forgiveness and Baptism, in reality receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and then live in the clear, simple practice of the early Church, then fear will fall on every soul, and men will see that God is alive in the Church, and greater wonders and signs will be done. For is the healing of a sick soul not greater than the healing of a sick body? Is the casting out of evil spirits not possible now? This fear will come, if men see that pride departs and humility takes its place; idleness is given up, and devotion takes its place; illiberality is given up, and generosity takes its place; luxury is set aside, and simplicity becomes the rule of life; if we take self-forgetfulness instead of selfishness; if we are simple and true; if prayerlessness is no more the habit of life, but communion; if we live like David in the trust "The Lord is upon my right hand that I should not be moved"—when these have come to pass (and there is no soul on whom this may not come, for greater miracles are wrought than telling the sick man to take up his bed) then fear will come. Then the Church will be seen with its saving and wonder-working power, gathering souls for Jesus Christ.

Signs and wonders.

Thursday[1] is the keynote of our position. Do remember it when you are not here.

There is one last point of this teaching. I know how impossible it would be considering how many things there are on you to do, and the fatigue which must take possession of you; considering these things, I cannot expect you in a body to gather round this particular breaking of bread in this Chapel. But do seek some breaking of bread, week by week, at least; and on Thursdays give your prayers for those who meet here, and remember before the Lord that death which blossomed into the Resurrection. So keep in "the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

[1] On Thursdays there was a weekly Celebration in Lambeth Chapel for those who came to hear these Addresses.

V.

15th July, 1887.

Acts ii. 44–47, and iii.

Recapitulate. The Deeper Principles of (ii. 37, 38)

Conviction; Repentance; Baptism into Christ; Forgiveness; Gift of the Spirit;

and the Fresh Habits of (ii. 42)

Teaching; Feeling; Communion; Common Prayer;

form and train a New Society capable of dealing with all the problems,—and would do so now.

v. 44. The Community of Goods was temporary and local: Property serves Christian ends, e.g., Probation, Self-Denial, Responsibility.

iii. 1. S. Peter and S. John together—and the Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate.

v. 6. The Gift is often the absence of the gift.

Special giving has not been suggested here for obvious reasons, but the duty flows with immense responsibility from *all* we have thought.

v. 12–26. *S. Peter's* Second Address: The Teaching about the Person of Christ deepens.

1. The effect of His Name—in response to Faith.
2. The Reality of His Presence—to Faith.

v. 19. 3. Inference "Turn to Him"—by Faith.

The *effect* spoken of is "Perfect soundness"; completeness (ὁλοκληρία) flows from Him.

And *this* miraculous effect is a forecast, instance, example, specimen, of the Future which will pass on through "seasons" of Refreshing (καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως) into Ages of Restoring (χρόνοι ἀποκαταστάσεως).

What then is our Preparation for or Contribution to this Future in self or in others through the Principles and the Habits of the Apostolic Church? (Reading: Children: People.)

Recapitulation. We have spoken of the common ideas of dulness attached to the conception of the Church, and we have asked how we can consider it apart from these false meanings—the glory and beauty of it. And again we spoke of what the essence of the Church really is; how, soon after Christ had gone (gone in appearance, not in reality, for He was withdrawn from the senses only) the Church was formed; how Christ went on living a life in the Church—that life which it is ours to take up and live in, just as in the days when He lived in the flesh. We noticed how instantly there burst out those great principles which were realised in the Apostolic Church—Conviction, the knowledge of sin and of self; Repentance, the change of mind, the lifting up of the mind to a higher level; Baptism, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit[1], accompanied by the Forgiveness of sins, and followed by the Gift of the Spirit—those five things. We saw these five principles coming into the soul of the Church and the heart of her members with power. Thus at once was created the body and the practices of the Church which still exist among us. A deeper principle than had been known before was realised, and formed new habits, new practice, a new teaching, which first implied new learning. And we saw that this life was given us as a gift to impart.

We saw how the sincere acceptance of a belief in Conviction, Repentance, Baptism, Remission, Gift of Holy Spirit and the power of these things created a body of people capable of affecting the world then and for ever.

Then also came the fellowship of feeling, life, thought and word; people knowing each other, not through mere earthly ties, but because they were in God, and God in them. Then this feeling led on to communion, intercourse with those that

[1] The passage ii. 38 runs *βαπτισθήτω...ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι* Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...but this passage and viii. 16, xix. 5 do not necessarily imply that the Apostles used a *formula* of Baptism different from that in Matt. xxviii. 19, cf. the Διδαχή, c. vii., Justin Martyr, *Apol.* LXI. On Baptism in the name of Christ alone during the Baptismal controversy of the 3rd century, see *Cyprian*, by Archbishop Benson, pp. 406 ff.

still live and a partaking of the joy and faith of those that have gone—not separated, in the mystical intercourse, from those who shall be, because the unborn generations are in God who sees all as one body; and these all are one body in Him through Christ, in the pervading work of the Holy Ghost. Thus they continued in daily communion. Then, prompted by the need of the heart, the hunger of the heart, they continued in daily prayer; asking daily for all that the company of believers needed.

And how careful they were at once to embody these in living intercourse and training through Teachings, Life (*κοινωνία*, conversation), Feeling, Holy Communion, United Devotions.

And thus having been baptized, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and having these deeper principles, we find the Church grown at once into the outer habits, continuing in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house. If those who have begun to live give up the tokens of life, we must expect to see the inner principles get weaker, to find less desire for the communion of saints; to find that they are less certain that the Holy Ghost is in them. But if they have really felt these principles within them, they are sure to come back to the holy habits of Christian life.

ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ daily. *ὁμοθυμαδόν...κατ' οἶκον.*

Every one of these principles and habits are ours to-day if we will use them. If we do use them we find joy and peace; if not we find we are uncertain whether we belong to God or to the world. As surely as the mercury registers every pressure of atmosphere, shewing whether the air is heavy or light, so surely is the Christian soul affected by attention to or relaxation of the holy habit of life.

And all these elements of Truth and Power are ours and all the Practice if we will use them.

vv. 44, 45. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need."

v. 46. "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

"They ate their bread with gladness and singleness of heart." To 'eat bread' is the Hebrew expression for living;

And all the effect (may be ours), gladness, singleness of heart, praising God, favour.

they lived their life then in that spirit which we would give anything to have, the spirit of "gladness"; this is not a characteristic of our time, and we can see why it is not: and "in singleness of heart," which means the certainty that Christ is ours and that He knows everything: which means that though we sin we are sorry to sin, that if human infirmity were taken away we would not sin one sin. They were not afraid to acknowledge that God was good to them and loved them. The world does not laugh at singlehearted people, it loves and honours them; none are so despised as those who seem to be religious and are not, except those who are drawn to religion and have not the courage to live up to it. Singlehearted people are not afraid of saying 'I love God, and God loves me,' and they are loved of all.

There was one thing peculiar to that City and House and Time which we ought to speak of—The Community of Property.

Another point is that "they had all things common." This is peculiar in that it never occurs again in the Christian society; it is peculiar to this city, and to this time. Many foolish things are said about the community of goods—that we have not the sincerity of the old times or we should have all things in common now. But this community of goods lasted but a short time and was peculiar to Jerusalem. If we suppose it was otherwise we make many of the Epistles meaningless, for the Apostles urge the distribution of alms, which would be impossible if all shared alike. There is not anywhere else a trace of the Communistic principle, and the reason of its occurrence here is plain.

The poverty of the Jerusalem poor—why?

Jerusalem always was, and must be, poor, because of its geographical situation which does not allow of its being made a commercial centre. The kings and nobles alone were rich, partly through taxes, partly because what commerce there was, was in their hands. When the Christians became Christians in Jerusalem, all their means of subsistence was taken from most of them. Among them there were many very poor, others very rich, as for instance Barnabas the Cypriot who was a landowner; so that they had indigence and riches together, and there was at first no way of keeping the poor except by this common treasure (Acts xxiv. 17).

The circumstances were peculiar: very rich and very poor people formed part of the same body.

Later we find Christians from all the world sending alms

to Jerusalem; S. Paul and S. Barnabas carried on in their missionary tours collections for the Society of Christians at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 29, 30, xxiv. 17; Ro. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 3; Gal. ii. 10). By the time that the Epistles were written the community of goods was probably at an end, having continued only for a few months, the poor afterwards being supported by contributions from all the Christians.

This was Local and Temporary.

Sometimes the question comes as a scruple to people whether they ought not to do more in the way of surrendering property. I think the time will come when they will do so; many people, Sisters and others, do so now quietly, and I think the time is coming when people will absolutely descend to poverty for the sake of Christ and the Church: it seems now as if the Church beckoned them to it. But we do not get rid of the responsibility of wealth by surrendering it; the question still remains whether we have done so rightly.

There are three things for which wealth is given to us:

(1) For probation. We should not spend rashly because we have much, or meanly because we have little. There is a characteristic of the present time which must be got rid of. People declare themselves to be poor because social exigencies, which they must live up to, are such a strain upon them. They imagine that society demands so large a part of their income, that all who do not live really generously complain of being poor. This is not Christian; this is not a mark of intellect, it does not shew masterliness in dealing with what is given to us, the administration of which is great and noble if it is performed well. On the other hand if people let things take their course they find they are called upon to spend without thinking about it, and they have nothing for great causes. Wealth gives opportunity for that noble use of faculties which God demands.

Community of Property would have destroyed (if perpetuated) responsibility. (1) Probation.

(2) It is given as opportunity of self-denial.

(2) Charity, Self-denial.

(3) It is given as a responsibility. For everything we must give account. Think of the awful parable of Dives. Nothing is said of him except that he was very rich: he was only living like a rich person, carelessly, recklessly; having enough and more than enough.

(3) Responsibility.

So we shall greatly miss the meaning of the passage about the community of goods if we allow it to make us wretched with the thought that Society is all wrong now because the Christian Church does not insist on community of goods. If the Church did do so there would be one great power gone from it.

iii. *vv.* 1–11. "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

"And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

No one can read this scene without being touched by it. One associates it with Raphael's beautiful picture; one is reminded of the figure of the man in wretched estate who is being healed, and near him the figure of another man in the same wretched state with a cynical expression on his face. The picture is, as all Raphael's pictures are, full of hidden meanings.

The scene is so tranquil. S. Peter and S. John going up together at the hour of prayer to the temple. They went

up still to worship, to see the lamb slain, and the smoke of incense going up; they, the only people who had the key to the meaning of these offerings.

ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, friends together, going to pray together.

Every word of the story is instinct with life—the Beautiful Gate, made of the finest Corinthian brass; it required no less than twenty men to turn the door on its hinges, and the door looked towards Persia to remind the Jews of the time when they had come from the East, returning from Exile. Peter and John entered the temple among the poor who thronged the doors.

The Temple—the ὡραία gate—'Begging.'

This state of things we can hardly understand now, but the time was when the doors of cathedrals, and, further back, the doors of monasteries used to be thronged with poor; and such scenes must have drawn out men's sympathies with suffering. Now in England all poverty and suffering is swept into our hospitals and workhouses; we don't know, unless we take the pains to look, how miserable humanity is. Lord Shaftesbury when he was dying said, "he could not bear to die and leave the world so wretched."

But as the case now is, each of us must do what he can, remembering at the same time that a definite piece of teaching is gone, which was given by the constant sight of misery. This cannot happen without a certain change passing over us, and it is necessary for us to see that we do not lose by these altered conditions, that we do not get increased hardness of heart.

He "asked to receive an alms." We must remember that this almsgiving was not so pauperising then as it would be now. The poor had a recognised right to be maintained by what they might receive at the gate.

"And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us." Note how the readiness and warmheartedness of the stalwart man always comes out in S. Peter; he is always foremost; first to run, as he runs to the sepulchre, as well as first to fall.

"But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And immediately his feet and ankle-bones received

strength, and the perfect soundness of limb was visible to all who saw him walking, and leaping, and praising God. This is no case of nervous debility, it is definite disease; the man had been lame from his mother's womb. The people examined him, and took knowledge of him, that it was indeed he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; and the miracle filled them with wonder and amazement. Think of Raphael's beautiful picture,—a stranger lifting up the robe which has fallen over the man's leg, holding up his hands in wonder. The picture gives so entirely the feeling of the passage.

The Gift is often the absence of a gift.

"Silver and gold have I none." They were remarkable by their absence. How often the gift of God to us is the absence of gifts. If we would lay this to heart it would often stop all complaining that we cannot help people; they are often helped through our not being able to give them the thing they ask for. So it was with the Apostles; they could give nothing which the man expected, but what they had they gave. If S. Peter had had silver and gold what did happen would not have taken place. The gift of God to us is often something which we are naturally lacking in, and therefore strive to obtain. Weakness, bad health, sickness, all that hinders our longing and desire after usefulness; there are gifts through the very absence of power, the absence of opportunities which we long to possess. Thus weakness comes from the hand of God; the absence of a gift we should like to have is often our gift. We find that God has really made us infinitely richer by not giving us that which we had asked to have.

And this is no new thing. What was it that made Demosthenes an orator? If we look at his bust we see that he is a man made by physical causes to stammer; and it was this which led him to go and declaim by himself on the sea-shore. The gift which made him the prince of orators was the absence of a gift. The burning fire of thought was in him, but he was devoid of expression, and expression would never have been with him what it was but for this infirmity. Limitations to our aims, to our actions, to our powers, all

these are gifts. Will it not take away the sting of suffering to turn a limitation and weakness into a gift? will it not take away the pain of inability, of forced inaction, to turn them to profit and to good account, to view them as a gift, not as a cross?

I knew a man—I may not mention his name, for this fact for some reason does not appear in his life—whose particular characteristic was courage. And he told me that he was only courageous because he had been naturally such a coward. He found at the University that he was afraid of everything, so he took all kinds of headlong exercise, till at last, he said, he was afraid of nothing for himself, but for others only. Here again the limitation was the gift of God.

I have never mentioned to you any object to which I wanted you to give; to do so would be quite unsuitable to these meetings. But you must not think that I have not done so from any indifference on the subject. I have put this subject aside to attempt to help you to gain real thought and knowledge of the habits and use of the Apostolic Church, and this will bring with it the right use of silver and gold. But I mention it in passing, to shew you that it is from no want of thought of the importance of the subject that I have not brought it before you. I believe the time is coming for a greater and nobler use of silver and gold. Many of those who are accused of not being liberal givers give in secret grandly; but a grander liberality is coming when people will not feel it necessary to give in secret, but will openly give their life to the poor and their riches to the things of God.

I have never suggested to you Silver and Gold—though [there are] Mission Societies, though [there is the Mission to] Assyria—I seek not yours, but you.

But the *perception of things as they are* is *the* thing.

Days of self-dedication of all are approaching—not secret. God has His calls waiting for some who least think it.

I think we are near a time like that of S. Francis of Assisi. '"Are you thinking of a bride?" said a friend lightly, when he stood suddenly silent under the still night. "Yes," he replied, "of a bride, nobler, richer, more beautiful than your fancy can conceive." And so he took to him Poverty, or rather Humanity bleeding from a thousand wounds, "whom none had chosen for his own since Christ Himself,"' as Bishop Westcott tells us[1].

[1] *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 105.

This is the last time for some months that I shall speak to you. I thank you in my heart of hearts for the many prayers, not only that I know, but that I feel you offer for me, making it necessary for me to go for your own dear sakes to the heart of things. You have said of the sore evil of society 'what can we do for it?' And you have shewn your desire to do what you can by meeting here. We must try what we can to put it right, and I think we do see a little more what God in His high purpose has in view for English society. I think that if we get more people to live the life of the Apostolic Church in those five great thoughts and four great habits; if we get a church like you—for you are living like a church—that God will shew more than we have yet seen, how to remedy this evil.

Now look at this second Sermon of S. Peter's.

vv. 12, 13. "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him."

"Ye delivered," the strong man never denies their guilt; "ye," pretending as you do to be religious people.

Peter now draws out deepening Teachings from Christ about Himself:

vv. 14, 15. "But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

He wants to draw out in this something deeper than either he or the brethren had seen before, and it is this:

v. 16. "And by faith in His name hath His name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

His 'Name' effects what He Himself had done, i.e. because He

This new principle is that Christ's Name can do what Christ can do. His Name borne in our hearts, understood, leant upon, can do what Christ Himself can do. It can

perform those healings of the spirit, infinitely greater than the healings of the body, powers which were withdrawn as soon as they became unnecessary as a sign to the heathen. The Church would have been ashamed if it had been necessary for miracles to continue, and so ought we to be. The after work is to be done by persuasion.

is with His Name. "Two or three in my Name there am I."

"Perfect soundness." This is what S. Peter insists upon. The man was made a complete man. Certainly this was not a case of merely nervous illness, but of some defect of bone or muscle; the man had been incomplete.

What Faith (Trust) in Him effects —ὁλοκληρία.

v. 17. "And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Notice again the gentleness of S. Peter. He cannot bear to go on, after the dreadful reproaches that have been necessary, without trying to comfort them: "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, etc."

v. 18. "But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled."

"He thus fulfilled." He might have fulfilled these things in many ways, but they were fulfilled thus. But S. Peter knew that people cannot be content with the excuse of having done wickedness in ignorance—it must be put right, so he goes on "Repent ye therefore, etc."

vv. 19–21. "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began."

'He shall send Jesus Christ.' Then we can command His presence, by turning our hearts earnestly to give up anything that is against Him; He is here. If we bear that in our hearts we shall give up the thoughts that some hymns teach:

> "And now that thou dost reign on high,
> And thence thy waiting people bless,
> No ray of glory from the sky
> Doth shine upon our wilderness."

That is not Christian doctrine; He is not far away; and we want no ray of glory from heaven. If our hearts are aching for such things we are not Christian in spirit. Christ wants us to walk by faith not by sight; and by faith He tells us He is here, now, and wherever a faithful soul seeks Him. Christ is not far off: "thinner than the subtlest lawn[1]" is the veil which now screens Him from our sight. But He is not the less near to us because we cannot see Him; He is in our midst. The time to rend the veil has not yet come, because His time is not yet fulfilled. Yet His Presence is a reality, and unless we can feel and realise this, we shall often doubt, and ask ourselves if we have yet indeed received the Holy Spirit, have indeed the New Life, are really His. Has Christ not said "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them"? not there I *will* be, but there I *am*. His Presence is our strength.

"Look on us," Peter says to the Lame Man; and we, knowing whose Name will heal us, must turn and fix our steadfast eyes on Christ; must turn to Him in prayer and seek His help. His Name has not lost its antient power; He and He only can heal the soul. Turn to Him then in Faith, realising His Presence. You know what faith in Him effects, a perfect soundness, and what do we want but a perfect soundness?

But it must be ὁλοκληρὸς πίστις.

But it must be with a whole-hearted faith. It is the very condition of our walking here in Him that we should believe without seeing.

The Inference of Common Sense. *Therefore* "convert," have "sins blotted out," and their miracle is yours.

Then S. Peter bids them at once be baptized, wash away their sins and receive forgiveness—to do what Naaman declared he would not do. What has a few drops of water on a child to do with forgiveness of sins, we might ask? Nothing but that Christ made it to be so; nothing but that we are living by faith not by sight.

Then he bids them to look forward to two thoughts—times of refreshment, and the restitution of all things.

It belongs to the coming ὁλοκληρία,

There are two things then,—the times of refreshment now, and the final restoration of all things.

[1] *Keble's Christian Year.* Sunday next before Advent.

And the seasons of refreshment are following on the repentance—the turning to Christ. "Refreshment" is a beautiful word, if we remember that it is derived from 'refrigerium,' bringing the association of coolness, like the idea of a crystal spring in the midst of a dry weary plain through which a caravan drags along till it comes to the water and palm-trees and rocks, and the suffering is turned into comfort and peace.

first the καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως, second the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων.

ἀνάψυξις, your weary hot dry life—endless repetition of scenes of the same unelevating kind, intolerable unless connected with bodily refreshment. These [seasons] are ours now.

What is it then that S. Peter promises? Do you not feel this life hot and dry and tiring? Do you not feel that this season in London would be almost intolerable except for certain things which lead you beyond it; that, taken by itself, no one would wish to lead such an existence; when you look back on it how stale and vapid it seems, it seems to drain your very life, but there is no helping it. Even here S. Peter says, be baptized—repent, and there may come in the midst of all, the cool sweet pastures.

Then the last restitution: the word itself means refounding, re-establishment of all; not indeed that this State which is to come ever has been before, but there have been qualities which promised it all. As in the great City the life should be a grand one, in a great Society there should be a life free from all corruption: this might have been though it never has been; but God says here that it shall be established. A great city—the kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour into it, and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there, for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And God says that this society of men shall be established as He meant it to be.

ἀποκατάστασις—it is a broken fragmentary state, large pieces missing.

And now we see why to this incomplete man completeness was given—as an example of what should be—that all that is incomplete shall be so filled up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ whom Heaven receives until the foretold ἀποκατάστασις: He yearns to be back with you visibly. And so each man should be; all shall still have their characteristics when they rise, though all shall rise perfect. No two things that God made were ever quite alike.

Each individual may through 'converting' (*v.* 26) have a foretaste

Take then these two promises to heart. The Christian society is to be glad, singlehearted, full of the praises of God; popular too—in favour with all people. Then if, after the washing away of sins, we try to live thus, we shall become examples of that which God means shall be everywhere for all; and further remember that God means us to use as a gift the limitations He gives us.

What is the Preparation for this future, and what is your contribution to it? It must be through the Principles and the Practice of the Apostolic Church.

And thus we shall have those seasons of refreshment, known to Him who alone can forgive, and none beside.

"To those who fall how kind thou art,
How good to those who seek;
But what to those who find? ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know."

VI.

17th Feb. 1888.

Acts iv. 1–22.

Recapitulate. Nearness of Christ. Our Witness. The Given Power.

Interpret our Position. Christian Habits. *Emotion* not our "Best Gift."

We have a great Future to prepare—not merely to prepare for.

For that Future is prepared by the Life the Church lives—the Church's Life is quickened or slackened by the Lives poured into it: Yet to each is their own Life given back enriched a hundred-fold. If you receive nothing it is because you give nothing which can be quickened. How *not* to live that Life of the Church.

iv. 7, 17, 18. The 'Sadducee' still forbids you to use THE NAME and makes you suffer something.

8, 12. The First Answer—'This NAME is a reality.'

19, 20. The Second Answer—The unformed Christian gets Courage.

Modern Sadduceeism can be faced by the Name and the Courage —(e.g., Luxury, increasing as misery deepens). To have a private religion is to give up The Name and with it The Power.

(Opposition helps Principle to grow clear and to take hold.)

In many respects this chapter forms the turning point of the history of Christianity, but before we go on to this I will reiterate the chief points in the last three chapters.

Recapitulation. I. It was the evident intention of Jesus to make Himself felt as being close to His people, as being always as near them after His Ascension as during His life.

His nearness.

How many little words and acts of His were intended to make them feel His presence in a half-external way as He withdrew Himself little by little until they could live by faith, not by sight; this they could hardly do as long as He was there. And to us then it is not a loss but a gain, a gain to our whole being, to be able to live by faith, now that He does not give signs of His presence perpetually by marks that no one could deny, like the sign to the rulers here. As long as there were signs like these described here, believers could not have the fulness of faith. In this respect then we are in an advantageous position with regard to the Apostles, since it is possible for us to be as certain about Christ's presence, as if such signs were still going on.

The first point then is Christ's nearness to His people, and the gradual withdrawal of His evident presence, till He left them.

They [are] "witnesses."

II. The second point is the bounden duty of His followers to be witnesses of Him. Every other verse almost sounds in our ears, 'to bear witness.' The very sureness of belief is something, but we have more than that to give, because:

Power Promised—all true of *us*.

III. Thirdly, He has promised power. These chapters teach us that we shall have power when we want to use it. Not that we are encouraged to feel strong, but humble rather and weak, because this is the reality of our position, but when we are linked on to Christ He assures us that we shall have power, that our prayers, acts, and words shall be persuasive.

Interpret our Position —to ourselves at least —then we shall to others.

From these things we must interpret our position. Our souls have but a certain portion of time in the history of the world in which they can act. We do not know if they existed before, though we are quite certain they have no ending; but at any rate the time which God gives them to do His work here is limited by a few years. Very few have determined their own position in the world, God has put them into it. If He blesses the work of a labouring man with success so that he becomes a millionaire, it is not his own doing, and however self-conscious and proud he may be of his own power he must confess that there were many turns of fortune without which he would not have been what he is.

Those who talk glibly enough about carving out their own position must acknowledge that there were a great number of circumstances over which they had no control, but by which they have been placed where they are. Clever or dull, rich or poor, our position is not our own making but given to us, and it is given for a short time, and when we have passed away from it there will be but a few months before we are forgotten. People are prominent in society, drop away and are missed for a very short time; such is the manner in which we are set in the mysterious framework of the world.

Thus we are sure of Christ, we are bound to witness for Him, we have power given us by Him; and we have a definite position, which is all our own, and which no one else has filled or can fill, in which our nearness to Christ, our witness, His power given to us have to be exercised. Thus it becomes a matter of life and death to understand our position, to interpret it to others, and to use it.

And mould our Habits.

Then we must mould our habits. The philosopher, Bishop Butler, has a remarkable essay on this formation of habit. We can form almost any habit we please in a shorter or a longer time, so that things originally disagreeable become pleasant and natural. In the Acts we see the beginning of Christian habits described. In the first chapter we begin to hear of these new habits; and the first of these is the habit of Christian speech; they talked together of Him they loved. It followed as a matter of course that everything mean, low, un-Christian, avaricious, selfish and impure, was given up. The affairs of the world indeed may be as Christian as any other matters, but whether they are so or not depends on the way they are looked at.

1. Christian Speech together.

Avoid un-Christian speech. I know you *can*. Women in earnest are so whole-hearted.

But before I go on let me say how sure I am that you can do this, and how important the habit of Christian intercourse is. Women are really stronger than men—in this perhaps more than in anything else—that there is nothing in the circumstances that surround you which you cannot affect if you are in earnest. Here in the Acts you see how important is the place which is given to women, and how constant the mention made of them.

Then we noticed next the Christian doctrine and fellowship. The Apostles' doctrine is of course their teaching of the matter which they had in common.

2. Communion.

And then the Communion. This is one of the greatest and most formative of Christian habits; both the preparation for it, thinking over your conduct, life, habits, feeling; and further the receiving it, knowing that in it the power of Christ's life is given to the soul; and lastly the thanksgiving after it, for the name 'Eucharist' means thanksgiving. So at any rate try to make a weekly communion on Sunday, and if possible to receive it on a weekday also, either here, if possible, by the arrangements you yourselves made, or in any other place. But in any case let the Communion occupy in your minds and thoughts the place it did with the Apostles.

3. Read with Prayer.

The next habit is the habit of prayer, both in private and with your families, and also in public, with the Church. Many get less good than they might from public prayer because they pray so selfishly; they do not think enough of the spirit expressed in the words "*Our* Father," "give *us*." If you would realise that you have not gone to pray for yourselves alone, nor others for themselves; if you would ask God to give you a place in their prayers, and let them have a place in yours; many who go away with their hearts dry, would go instead with thankful hearts.

4. Lent—make a difference.

This is the beginning of Lent.

Now, knowing as you do, that the Church was the Apostolic Church from the beginning; remembering what heart-searchings there were about its doctrines and practice three centuries ago, and how it was the intention of your forefathers, remaining in the Apostolic Church, to drop all erroneous tradition that had grown up, and keep the pure Apostolic doctrine; knowing how those who want to turn back the hearts of men from their Church are bringing to these shores even now not only those doctrines which were dropped, but doctrines more monstrous and more strange[1]; knowing all these things, if

[1] Cf., for a fuller statement of the Archbishop's views with regard to the attempts made by the Roman Church during his Archiepiscopate, *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. II. ch. xi. and writings therein referred to.

you think that this Apostolic Church represents a fulness such as no other body can represent, see how you may bind yourselves up to the Apostles more closely through the Church, than you can do, if you are a thinker and believer by yourself.

What does it matter about the particular clergyman who ministers to you? It is with Christ we have to deal; even where the worship has become most corrupt it is Christ who is loved and worshipped. Superstition does not perhaps make so much difference as we should imagine. Nevertheless though He may find unity in difference of doctrine, it is not our part to make confusion by binding ourselves to those who hold doctrines we cannot believe in; it is for us to cling to the truth we know; to remember how we are bound to these men, our forefathers, who were bound to Christ, and died and suffered for Him.

The imperfections of a particular clergyman, of a particular Church Service,—we must look through these things; we are bound to overcome them, not to think too much about them. Bind yourselves to the Lord. Minute regulations are quite contrary to the thought of Christ, but He does teach that there are times and seasons; times to let the spirit have free course and be joyful; times to mourn over sins. And now the whole Church says let us mourn for sin, let us discipline ourselves. So let us use Lent.

5. Giving a fixed portion—a first charge.

Then we must consider the habit of giving; of giving not casually, but on some principle; deciding beforehand what you ought to give out of your income and giving that; not being influenced by whether it makes you feel comfortable at the moment to give. That is a selfish way of giving.

The Christians at the time we are reading of gave more than one would think of asking you to give; indeed it is not possible to prescribe what you should give. You know yourselves that a tenth part is the least that anyone should set aside. Some of you, I know, are nobly charitable, but it cannot be so with very many; for if one looks at lists of subscriptions to great objects the same names appear over and over again.

These habits then you can form. They mark the first appearance of the Christian Church. There is first the Witness for Christ, and the Power given to His witnesses: followed by the understanding of their position and the formation of Christian habits, especially the habit of Christian intercourse, the self-discipline, the habit of giving a fixed portion of their money.

6. Feeling. Not emotion necessarily—where characters so differ it is fearful to make that a Test.

And I have not said a word about feeling; because these habits must all come from feeling; not from emotion, but from resolute, right, steady feeling. Be a little more free in trusting to your feeling. I do not mean that you can trust to your emotions. Holy emotion is a great gift from Christ; when souls have followed Him for a long time, have cultivated a personal love for Him, then He gives them emotions which they can trust. But those who have most such holy emotion tell how they have also very long periods of dryness, so that they almost think He is leaving them. Then if they do not give place to this doubt He gives them emotion for a few hours it may be, like an oasis in the desert. But they are wise and understand that there is nothing more awfully deceptive than the thought that emotion is necessary.

So if some one of you were to say 'She can do this, for she has feeling, and I have not,' such an one is letting herself be led away by a most deceptive temptation. 'If I loved Christ I should have a passionate love for Him, but I have not; therefore I do not feel as I ought or love Him at all'—this is a gulf down which many fall; this is the broad road.

But all in the thought of the Great Future; then we shall have καιρὸς ἀναψύξεως in preparation for χρόνοι ἀποκαταστάσεως in which we shall be excellent workers or sorrowful exclusions.

The narrow way is the way of those who make up their minds to follow Him whether the sun shines or not. If we want to accomplish a long journey we do not say 'I will go no step unless the sun shines.' S. Peter exhorts us to go on believing that there may come "seasons of refreshing," till at last comes the great "age of restoration" in which all things will be working back to their first glory, and to a greater glory than was known before. But first we must be content with "seasons of refreshment," and these must be employed to build us up towards the great "age of restoration" which

shall come by and by. But all this I want to take to my own heart far more than many of you need to do.

The life of the organisation to which we belong depends on the life which is being poured into it by the members, and which it gives back an hundredfold. This is the meaning of the passages in which Christ says that any man who shall leave houses and lands and friends for His Name's sake shall receive an hundredfold more in this present life, and in the world to come everlasting life. That is to say, that all the life we try to pour into the Church now, all the sacrifices which we try to make, will be repaid here an hundredfold, and in the world to come we shall have not an hundredfold of human life, but eternal life.

There is the organisation which these Apostles set on foot for doing this—but it does not do it perfectly because individuals do not take their fair share in either Giving, Working, or Praying. There is no break between these men and us.

Its life depends on the life poured into it. It gives back Life an hundredfold.

If then in your Church, in your particular section of it, your parish, the ministry under which you live, you find there is a want of life, consider whether it is not because you yourselves are not contributing life to it. If you do contribute life or force to anything, you will not find it lifeless; you will find that it begins to live.

If you find a lifelessness it is because you are not contributing life force to it yourself, but have got some pet plan all to yourself.

Think then, if you are offering to your own branch of the Church anything which could be quickened. Ask yourselves, 'What am I offering up to take back quickened?' Are you going to the Holy Communion, are you praying? If you are considering almsgiving are you thinking 'What is the least that in propriety I can give?'

If you receive nothing, it is because you give nothing which can be quickened.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." Let us see in our human life how great are the Eternal Mountains. See that Christ is there in the Church, and there is then no fear of lifelessness.

You look over your own village, the hall and park, and the vicarage, school and Church, and the two institutions appear to you much the same. When visitors come they will see both, as necessary parts of our civilisation; and you do not often enough reflect perhaps what makes all the difference between the two—that there in the Church is the Sanctuary, not merely an external Sanctuary, but the Sanctuary of the holy Angels. You do not think enough of the Orders which have come down from those Apostolic days; of

If [these things are] so what is the good of excusing yourselves by harping on minor questions—blaming or neglecting the

clergy—who but they will do it?
You see Hall v. Parsonage; perhaps you and yours built the Church, the Schools, etc. The Hall and Castle and Family are parts of a very Visible Whole.
But the Church, HolyOrders, the Sacraments and Its answer are parts of an Invisible Whole.

the Sacrament in which the life and force of Christ are given; and of the prayers which go up and make it dear to God.

It is a great responsibility to say 'I am wiser than they are at the vicarage, I will make them go my way; I will not give in to the things they want me to give in to; I will set up other things of my own.'

Do take your right part in the administration, interesting every farmer, every inhabitant of the parish in the work of the parish, not thinking of yourself as the fountain of good, but remembering that to the Clergy is given the ministry of God. They won't bring down your position, but the reverse. Realise the awful dignity of every word that God has said[1].

iv. *vv.* 1–22. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in Him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any

[1] Cf. pp. 33–35.

other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

"Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought."

The Apostles were very plain people, and the council before whom they were standing was composed not only of the heads of the ministers of the Jews but also of great princes. The Sadducean high-priest was the representative of a line unbroken in the flesh for a longer time than that of any other nobility upon earth. Annas and Caiaphas had a more ancient nobility than any in Greece or Rome. It was the place of the high-priest to execute the awful rites of the Day of Atonement, which began when they came out of Egypt, and the observance of which lasts to this day among that nation which is so scattered and yet so powerful; which has representatives in almost every Cabinet Council of the civilised world; the richest nation and the poorest; the widest spread, and the most unchanging.

It was before such determined religionists, proud of their place, that the Apostles were standing. The Sadducees were vexed on account of this apparent proof given of the Resurrection in the healing of this man. They took a view parallel to that which any Squire might take of the relation of the hall to the Church. It was the view of these Sadducees that morals and religion must be kept subordinated to those who had to rule. It would not suit them that people should go about saying that there were angels and spirits, teaching the Resurrection of Christ. They were very much afraid it was true that He *had* risen, just as in the case of this man there was no denying that a miracle had been worked. What said the Sadducees then? 'You shall not teach in this name.'

'By what Name did you heal?' 'By the Name of Jesus.' 'Don't you mention that Name again.' How rational. What benefactors.

But first they go through an interrogation. "By what power have you done this?" This was a tribunal before which it was very difficult to lie. Peter says, "If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole."

Then what would be the logical, the natural answer of any man?—'Then, dear men, come and heal us all, heal all our miseries, tell us more about this Name.'

Not so the answer of the Sadducees: 'Don't mention that name any more, if you do we will put an end to you.'

The trial of Christ before the Sanhedrim was not more wicked and illogical.

Sadducean: 'You shan't say there is anything supernatural working on earth. You shan't teach this Name or *talk* it.'

'You shan't say there is anything supernatural, or any work on earth which we don't know all about; you shall not say anything to any man.' It was not only public speaking, but private talking which they tried to put down. So do very many people now. 'I can't enter into such questions, it would upset all my life.' I know of a merchant to whom someone said, 'How can you reconcile these trade transactions with the thought of Death and of Eternal Life?'

And he said, 'I don't talk about these, nor allow my sons to; it would upset one's nerve; we should not be able to carry on our transactions.'

Few people say this so plainly, but many do the same thing in every action of their lives: 'I am not going to enquire; you must not trouble me.'

S. Peter says, 'The Name of Christ does now the same things that Christ Himself did.' And here he gives them a hint of the manner in which they should read the Bible—"the stone," he says, "which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."

Christ's Living Reality (1) is their Subject.
Christ's Living Reality (2) is their Power.
Peter's speech. 'Jesus' *Name*' or Presence does the *same things* as 'Jesus in the Flesh'—does the work.
Seize on these hints how to read Scripture.
The Rejected Stone.
'The *Name of Jesus*, neither is there any other.'

This is what the workmen are doing in that wonderful work of Holman Hunt's, "Christ in the Temple." In the corner of the picture one catches sight of the workmen about the temple. They have a stone ready to go in, a beautiful block; the masons are measuring it, and there is one standing as if to say, 'It won't do, we must reject it.'

S. Peter says, 'This Jesus is become the head of the corner—whom you rejected.' Thus he gives those wonderful words which let us pray it may be ours to hear in peace on our dying beds; they are in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick—"there is none other Name under heaven whereby we may be saved." Happy shall we be if the last sound we hear on earth is this word of peace.

Christ's Living Reality (3) is their Courage.

Then the Apostles surprise this great body of wealthy men. Josephus tells us their names, and their great wealth, each of them in the strongest position any man in the world can occupy. They are astonished at the boldness and 'freedom of speech' of Peter and John, for they perceive they are 'unlettered,' that is to say unprofessional or untrained men, not brought up in the great schools of the Jews. They are astonished at their confidence.

The Name or Presence of Jesus gives the *Boldness* to 'unlettered' (ἀγράμματοι) and unprofessional, or untrained (ἰδιῶται) people;

Let us dwell a moment on this particular characteristic of courage. We know that these people had very little courage a little while before; that S. Peter himself had declared in answer to a sudden question that he did not know Jesus; and here they are utterly changed. And we know that the same power which gave freedom of speech and

equally to nervous and delicate ladies; equally to those who have such sense of weakness that they know not what would happen if temptation were great.

courage to these will give nerve to the most delicate and timid lady; boldness to the man who knows that his antecedents do not entitle him to be bold, and by themselves would render him tongue-tied before all those who know of his past. Let us pray for such an one that the Holy Spirit may give him courage.

It was nothing wonderful which these men said however, it was a blunt speech.

The Sadducean policy was the *prohibition of private persuasion.* So it is now—and Sadducean to abstain from it.

It is the Sadducean spirit which would debar us from private persuasion or open-speaking; it is that spirit within us which would make us refrain; it is that spirit which prompts men to say, 'Don't tell me about a dreadful death, it makes me feel ill. Don't speak to me of these hopes, they are not for me. Don't press on me those reasons, I can't follow you. Don't speak of its importance, I have other things to think about.'

But what *have* you to bring it to bear on?

Have courage then. Take the right time and place, but have courage. You have a great deal of power to bring to bear on the problems which are threatening us; the problems of poverty, of trouble of different kinds. But no harm can be done if men and women will front them calmly and with courage.

I would advise you to read the life of Jean Frédéric Oberlin. There you will see a man with resources so small that one would call them nothing, and yet producing a marvellous effect by taking pains. You know the life no doubt; in the short biography by Mrs Butler[1] the story is connectedly and beautifully told. Then ask yourselves, 'Can I with my resources rightly shrink and fear?'

In the most suffering moment—*new luxuries.* You fear and hate what you hear. Will you give in to what you fear and hate?

I hear of new luxuries coming in at Paris of which the only point is that they shall be unique and fabulously expensive. Is this true? and is this tide of luxury coming here? and if so, what are you going to do?

Are you going to give up the struggle and be privately religious? It is all over when the time comes that religious people, feeling that luxury is so great, resolve to give it all

[1] *The Life of Jean Frédéric Oberlin* (Religious Tract Society, by Josephine E. Butler, 1866.)

up, to retire and be religious by themselves. This was the sign before the French Revolution. There are no memoirs more beautiful than those of the religious lives at this time; but these lives had no effect because they were lived privately. If men had had more courage everything might have been different.

Then are you going to give up —and be *privately* religious? It may come to be the only thing— and then all is over. Exactly as before the French Revolution;

If it is true that there are great powers of destruction below, and great luxury above, you must take your stand now. If you are bidden to hold your tongue, told that it does not suit your position to speak, remember the answer of the Apostles, "We cannot but speak"—cannot but speak because it is true; if it was a philosophic fancy they could give it up and welcome; but this they cannot give up; what is true they must bring out.

or, are you going to stand and keep Society with you? Now you can:

Let that be with us this Lent, it is the best preparation for Easter. Let our motto be, 'I cannot but speak.'

if yours is the thought, 'We cannot but speak the things, we have heard and seen with Christ.'

VII.

24th Feb. 1888.

Truth and Falsity in Christian Purpose.

Acts iv. 23–v. 5.

[iv. 3] The First Christian Night in Prison.

25. Hymn on the Nothingness of Opposition,

28. which can only execute God's purpose:

29. prayer for courage[1]:

30. prayer for wonders to wait on courage.

31. Signal of approval once for ever.

32. Still more system in self-organisation and self-sacrifice to meet the sudden numbers and their loss of employment (like some facts of to-day). Was not Communism, but was voluntary (v. 4), local and temporary.

Self-Sacrifice living among us but very limited.

In other things Common Purpose rather than Combination needed.

36. Joses. His new Name. ('*Son of* Strengthening speech.') True Self-Sacrifice is True Strength for all.

Ananias.—Not so much a 'Judgment' as the Revelation of a Fact that as soon as Life is made a Falsehood it is over.

Taking credit for what is 'left undone.'

v. 23. "And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them."

How natural this is—'What said Alexander? What said

[1] 'Look on their threats and give us (*not Protection but*) courage to speak out.'

Caiaphas? What could they say when they heard of the power of this man Jesus whom they had all known? Tell us all.'

And they told them (*v.* 24), "and they when they heard it lifted up their voice to God with one accord"—here was the moving of the Holy Spirit—"and said,

The Hymn over the Nothingness of Opposition.

vv. 24–26. "O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the Holy Ghost, *by* the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,

'Why did the Gentiles rage,
And the peoples imagine vain things?
The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
And the rulers were gathered together,
Against the Lord, and against his Anointed.'

vv. 27, 28. "For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass."

"For of a truth" this thing had been done in this city. These words they quote are the very words which, sung in the temple, must have sounded so grand and so mystical, and no one knew exactly what they meant, for they did not know who this Anointed was.

"Thy holy Servant Jesus whom thou *didst anoint*"—there was no doubt now as who the Lord's "Anointed" was.

"The rulers"—syllable by syllable how the prophecy comes true; Herod the King and Pontius Pilate the ruler, these gathered against the Lord and His Anointed with the People and the Gentiles; as David said, "Why do the *Gentiles* rage and the People imagine a vain thing?"

You know perhaps that the word used for 'people' here is never used for Gentiles. The Gentiles were called ἔθνη—from which we have the words ethnic and heathen. The Jews called themselves on the other hand "λαός."

These glorious verses of the psalm, then, which they had often heard in the temple courts with the sound of trumpets,

they used now; "for of a truth...both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles (the Romans) and the People of the Jews were gathered together." And why? David himself begins his psalm by asking Why? and here is the answer, "to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." And now they begin their prayers:

iv. *v.* 29–v. 3. "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one *of them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. And Joseph, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?"

v. *v.* 3. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart?"

What a contrast to iv. 31, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

vv. 3–5. "Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How

is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it."

There are many chief lessons to be learnt from such a passage, but to group them clearly let us first take a special pair of points, 'Truth and Falsity in Christianity.'

The first night of Christians in Prison —many since.

It is worth noting before we go on that this was the first night that Christian men had had to spend in prison; and how many have there been since then! Think of the martyrs through all these centuries and over all the world making what has been so rightly called the Noble Army of the Martyrs. When we think of the agony and torture suffered since then, we may also think silently of this first night spent in prison for Christ's sake. And we may be sure that He who gave them the glory of it will give glory to all those who follow Him truly. It is this *Truth* in following Him that I wish to dwell on.

Then this hymn (*vv.* 24–29) is a hymn over the nothingness of opposition to Christ,—and if it is vain for His enemies to rage it is vainer still for His people to be afraid of them. Christ said that the gates of hell should not prevail against them; and 'prevail' does not give in English the real sense of the word, it means 'shall have no strength at all against them.' We think too much of the Church as if it acted on the defensive, as if hell were a great power against which it had to hold itself. But the word 'prevail' means exactly the reverse of this, that hell has no power. The Church is the aggressive power; the World and Hell powers to be driven off the field. They shall see their forces driven back and their fortresses razed if the Church will believe it has the power to do this. What does "the Song of Songs" say of it? that it is "terrible as an army with banners[1]." Let us lift up our hearts over this hymn.

World and Word. Creation and David.

What a fine verse this 24th verse is. The friends of these men had come back, having spent the night in prison, having been threatened with the uttermost punishment, and they lift

[1] vi. 4.

up their voice to the Creator whom they serve, the Creator and Lord of the heaven and earth and sea,—and what then were the People and Kings and Rulers to them? They testify to the Unity of the World. This God is the God who made the heaven and earth and sea and had spoken to them.

Opposition can only *execute* God's purpose—part of a mystery.

Well might they say it, and well it is for us to enter into their spirit. The enemies of God can do nothing but what God means them to do. They gathered together to abolish everything connected with Christ, but all they did was to raise up between heaven and earth the great Atonement which darkened the heavens, and rent the veil, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Man was created in the image of God, and for eternity God the Creator had meant to take man to Himself, and to reveal Himself as man. Man's sin seemed to make the design impossible. God created him to rise up with nature towards Himself, He made him "a little lower than the angels to crown him with glory and honour," and put all things in subjection under his feet. All nature was made subject to man here, and man was to be raised to greater and greater glory. "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world."

And yet man's fall, which seemed to render God's plan impossible and blot it out, only made it more glorious[1]. Has man fallen, is he subject to death? Then Christ shall be subject to all to which man is subject, except sin; He shall be subject even to death that He may lift up man from the lower to the higher level.

We do not know in what way the Atonement might have been made if the Jews and Romans had not determined to bar the way of Christ, but as it was they did but supply the means to bring to pass what God had purposed should be. That which seemed to render it impossible to carry out what God had meant, only rendered the accomplishment more glorious. Man had sunk to the lowest depths of misery, sin and estrangement, and Christ took his place. Man set

[1] Cf. "O felix culpa quae talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem." Eucharistic prayer in the Roman Service for Saturday in Holy Week. *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, by L. Duchesne, 2nd edition, 1898, pp. 243, 4.

himself to sweep Christ off the earth; he crucified Him and thus the great Atonement took place. What did the people and the Gentiles set themselves to do? What God's hand and counsel had foreordained.

This is a part of a great mystery, but we can see something of the lines going out into darkness and space; and what we see unmistakably is that opposition only serves to carry out God's purpose; as Herod, who set himself to destroy the Christ by killing all the young children in Bethlehem, only fulfilled another prophecy, "out of Egypt have I called my son." Opposition only carries out God's purpose. His opponents set themselves to work in darkness, but the effect of their work is the triumph of God's glory.

Prayer for Freedom of Speech. Look on their threats and give us (Protection? No) μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν —courage to speak out.

But there is a greater nobleness than the intellectual nobleness of this hymn. It is the nobleness of spirit; the hymn ends in the prayer, "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness." Let us ask ourselves this question in all simplicity. If at dawn, when we were terrified, hungry, having spent a night in prison, but being determined not to give up our cause, if then we went to prayer we might well begin, "And now, O Lord, behold their threatenings." But should we have no word for ourselves? 'Don't let them crush us. We have been charged with thy message, we are innocent and harmless. Look on us and defend us; look upon our wives and children. We will not go back from thee, but defend us.'

See how wonderful the prayer of these men is, "and grant" they go on; but what do they ask for? For nothing but courage to go on; they do not say 'look upon their threatenings and let them have no effect on us,' but they ask for courage to speak out.

Dear friends, is not this what we are wanting exactly at this particular time more than anything? If we want to really know and understand the problems of our time, the best thing we can do is to dig in the Acts, and see how the society to which we belong began. In any other society, if things seem to be going wrong what do the members look for? They

refer back of course to the record of the beginning of the society, to see what its first principles are, and what those people who first started it intended it to be.—So we must do here.

Thus when we find in our families, in the company which we cannot help keeping, which it is right to keep,—a fixed opposition, hindrances put in our way with an intention to chill us, and which we feel will chill us at last, is not this a clause to add to our daily prayers, 'Look upon our difficulties and give us—not safety, nor protection—but courage'? So shall we live in spirit like those in our country in whom we have most pride, for in war, on the battlefield, what they desire is courage. May we have the same.

v. 30. "While thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus."

Prayer for Wonders to wait on Courage (they do).

Don't let us forget to make that prayer still. Wonders, greater than strengthening a man's muscles, can be done by faith. It is a greater wonder to turn a man from irreligion than to strengthen the muscles of his body; and it is wonders of this kind for which we should pray.

v. 31. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Signal of Approval of that sort of prayer given once for ever.

Thus an external sign was given once for all, and not for those only to whom this happened, but for us also. The place was shaken where they prayed, there was a great trembling, and the place was still again. And this sign was not given to encourage them only, though it was given first to encourage them; but it was given to be written for us.

In passing let us notice this sign of shaking. Perhaps it was to make them remember that He was present Who shook the earth when He died. As He breathed out His Spirit the earth did quake, the Veil was rent, signifying that the way into the Holy Place was now open for all. So now to give sign of His presence He shook the place.

These external signs and wonders have ceased now, and

I have tried to shew how ashamed we ought to be if we were still to want external signs; but let us pray to Him who shook the place that He will work the greater wonders among us now. "Greater things than these shall ye do," Christ said, and He was speaking of the effect, greater than external signs, which the disciples should have on the souls and spirits of men. We begin our service each time with a prayer to the Holy Spirit. The test of its being answered will be your courage.

Is the Holy Spirit among us? The *test* is your Courage.

Then the narrative runs rapidly on, the scene changes, but we see the same teaching about Truth and Falsity. The Apostles pass at once, being most practical people, to the work of organisation—to an improved system of self-organisation and self-sacrifice.

Still more system in Self-Organisation and Self-Sacrifice to meet the sudden numbers and their loss of employment. It was successful, *v.* 34.

Why they wanted this organisation we are not told, but we see clearly enough. It was with them then as it is now with Christian converts in Mohammedan and Hindoo countries. Those who are converted are thrown out of employment, and thus deprived of all means of subsistence. Many of these were poor, and thus the richer members of the Church found a great number of poor who could look to them alone. Without hesitation they organise themselves, they give up all their property.

Like some cases of to-day.

This system is voluntary. Look at ch. v. *v.* 4. Joseph—to whom they gave the affectionate name of Barnabas—had an estate which he sells, probably in Cyprus, which was then a favourite place of residence for those in the East or in Rome, and had brought all into the treasury; but the charge against Ananias is not that he did not bring all, but that he brought a part, saying it was the whole.

It was not Communism—but was a voluntary, local, and temporary scheme.

'You admire,' such is S. Peter's argument to Ananias, 'as all must do, this great man who has brought all his wealth; you sell your estate and bring a part, declaring that what you bring is the price of the whole. You were not obliged to sell it, or to bring the price, but you were obliged to tell the truth about it, and it is not to us you have lied, but to Christ Himself who is here.'

We must go back again for a moment. This organisation

must imply that at any rate a large number gave up all their wealth, though it would be wrong to press the words "as *many* as had land" into the meaning *whoever* had land, for the words of S. Peter imply that to surrender all was not necessary, it was not compulsory; but the vast majority did it to meet the sudden, unexpected distress, and the system was very successful, for we read that no one had need. The system entirely succeeded, it is true, but the passage is often pressed foolishly and even wickedly; it has often been described as Communism, and the conclusion drawn that Communism is the outcome of Christianity. But Christ came not to overthrow society but to pervade it with a mighty spirit, and the conclusion of the necessity of communism is against everything else that we read. Jerusalem always had a large number of poor people dependent upon the rich; we know that S. Paul was often collecting money for the poor at Jerusalem. It was a place of few capabilities, and it could not become a centre of manufacture or commerce, so that there were necessarily many poor always in it; and just now their number was very much increased.

There is no appearance of a communistic system anywhere else in the New Testament, although the Christian congregations laid aside part of their revenues for alms, as S. Paul exhorts. Society was intended to follow still its natural order, though filled by the Spirit of God—Christ says that we have the poor always with us. This 'Communism' then was not forced among even the earliest congregations in other places; the system was voluntary, and the plan merely local and temporary.

As we read this account of Jerusalem we cannot help thinking of the state of our great towns at present. Our towns attract a large number of our own poor and of foreigners, and there is great need among them; but a system of Communism here and now would mean total ruin.

What this passage *does* teach us is how elastic the Christian Church ought to be when a need comes. The Church here threw itself at once into this remarkable organisation, and carried it out successfully. It teaches us

therefore no one system, but the need of elasticity to meet any need.

The pressure of poverty has scarcely ever in the world's history been greater than it is now. Our rulers are not like these Jews, trying only to preserve their place and station, reckless of anything else; but yet we are not the less required to try to find some solution which will enable society to meet the problem so close to us and so difficult. But of this one thing I am sure, that if we are all of one heart and one soul about it, we must succeed in finding the solution. Self-sacrifice is very living among us, but it is very limited. At present there are a number of people able to think who will not think; able to help who will not help.

I have just been reading an angry paper which contains, however, among much that is untrue, strange warnings to us. It is strange and unfair to us of the Church that so much of the press is in the hands of those opposed to us. Not only the newspapers, but works of fiction, and good works, give so much credit to other religious bodies, and deny it to the Church. All of you who know the East-end and South London know how much the Church is doing there. But whether you go to the East-end or to the South, all who are at work say the same thing, that it is distressing to know that there are so many kind hearts in the West ready to do work, who don't do it merely because it is not at hand, because they do not overcome the difficulty of the little journey down to the East or South.

It is not Combination but Common Purpose and παρρησία which will effect the change.

Among other things which you want in your Society work (I don't like the name, but there is no other word to use), one great thing is—not combination—but *a common purpose.* If you had this it would very greatly strengthen your work. If there is any evil habit freshly and vigorously asserting itself in the upper walks of life, it can be overcome by such truth and reality of purpose as the first Christians had. If you have such reality of purpose, combination does not matter; what does matter is that you should be quite sure of each other; and you will be if you pray that you may live with this common purpose and courage of the first Christians.

v. 36. "And Joseph, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race"—

Joseph the Landowner (the Field), the Levite. His New Name '*Son of* strengthening speech.' True Self-sacrifice is True Strength for all.

You may have been disappointed at "exhortation" being substituted for the old "consolation." The meaning is really not very different; in fact one can hardly choose between the two if one wants to translate "παράκλησις." It is the same word as that used for the Holy Spirit and means 'strengthening speech,'—to the sorrowful, consolation; to the strong, exhortation. Each word expresses one part of the meaning. "Son of" is the noble Hebrew idiom.—'Son of,' 'daughter of' means one who is fully impregnated with the spirit of anything. Those sold to wickedness are called "sons of Belial." Our Lord is called the "Son of man," to assure us that He has the whole of man's nature, all that enters into man. Not sin, indeed, because sin is not an essential part of humanity. So with Barnabas: he could not open his lips without comfort to those who were in trouble, and without strengthening. It is a noble picture.

Ananias. Not so much a 'Judgment' as (like all else here) a Revelation of Fact—that as soon as Life is made a Falsehood it is over.

And following this comes the picture of Ananias. It is a great mistake to read this story to children and frighten them with it. It is not so much an account of the Judgment of Ananias, as an awful exhibition of the other side of the picture we have been looking at.

On the one side we have the man strengthened by faith, an exhibition of the beginning of the "restitution of all things." Christ's power entering into the man passes through his body, and makes his body strong. It is only the limitation of the present time that prevents this being so with us.

The story of Ananias is in the same way a revelation; it is a mistake to tell children that his death is a sign of God's anger against lying, therefore they must be afraid of lying. The point of it is the contrast with the story of the miracle of healing. The life which has made itself utterly false ceases to be a life; it is over.

Taking credit for what is 'left undone.' A third Confession:

And the teaching of the story is that we should be more entirely ourselves; that we should discard posing, attitudinising, taking credit for what we are not doing. If you take

falsity into your life you have ceased to live, you have lied unto the Holy Spirit who is trying to make you strong, to make you do something for God, as His sons. In doing all that the Spirit prompts you not to do; in not doing what He prompts you to do; and in continuing in this you are dead; the Life is gone out of you. This is what the story means; it is not a lie to men—that matters nothing, for what are men? It is a lie to God. You have chosen a life which is not a true life, and if it is not a true life it is not life at all.

"and we behave as if we had done those things which we have left undone."

Let us search ourselves and see what warnings this word has for any one who has not a single purpose. It is a fearful thing to take credit for what we have not done, and this warning comes home most to religious people. They cannot help being loved and admired because they belong to God. Then let them belong to Him wholly. Don't go to the length poor Pascal went, who in his weakness tried to behave unkindly lest people should think him too good. But be sincere. The more God has touched us the more we ought to take to ourselves the thought 'I have done those things that I ought not to have done and I have left undone those things that I ought to have done; and I have credit for doing that which I have left undone. Make me, O my God, sincere to the very depths of my soul.'

VIII.

7th March, 1888.

Acts v. 6–32.

v. 7–10. The Accomplice Wife. Reversal of Wifehood (1 Pet. iii. 2).

v. 11–13. This growing Organisation consolidated by a Divine ('Judgment').

v. 14. This growing Organisation reinforced by fresh outburst of healing Power.

v. 12. Viz., in answer to the Prayer of iv. 30.

v. 15. The healing shadow.

v. 16. The suffering many.

(The Believing, v. 14, and the Rest[1], v. 13.)

v. 17. The Second Inquisition of the Sadducees (sceptic not fanatic).

v. 28. Guilty conscience makes cruel.

v. 19. Futility of Persecution typified in the Angelic Interposition.

v. *vv.* 7, 8. "And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much."

Peter named of course in asking the question the sum which Ananias had affirmed to be the price of the whole place.

"And she said, Yea, for so much."

vv. 9, 10. "But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the

[1] Compare S. Luke viii. 10, xii. 26, xviii. 9, 11, Ro. xi. 7, Eph. ii. 3.

feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband."

"The young men,"—these answer perhaps to an order established directly after in the Church, who were charged with certain minor offices; the order may have been already in process of organisation.

vv. 11, 12. "And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things. And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch."

"Solomon's porch," you will remember, was the magnificent cloister of gigantic proportions which ran along the side of the hill on which the temple stood. The ground had been levelled along the hill side, built up in some places with a solid substructure, in some places vaulted; and underneath the vaulting were the wells from which came the water used in the service of the temple, and for the cleansings. On the flat structure thus made was reared the porch called after Solomon. The porch must have been like a Cathedral with its three aisles; the central aisle higher than the other two; it was in fact of much the same proportions as the nave of Lincoln Cathedral. It was a place of perfect coolness in the summer heat; where the people who wanted to hear some teacher of religion congregated together to hear him speak; for there was no entering into the temple itself; so here religious discussion was carried on. Everyone had a right to be there; they could gather in considerable numbers, as the Jews did to hear the Rabbis teaching.

vv. 13–20. "But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow

some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

"But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the Apostles, and put them in public ward. But an Angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought."

v. 20. "The temple" here means the mass of the buildings including the porch. "Go and speak in the temple," 'go back,' that is, 'to the usual place.'

v. 21. "And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught."

We have a curious account given by Josephus of the opening of the temple in the morning. When the first beam of the morning sun struck it, the great door of the temple, with the brazen vine on it, was opened so that the people could see into the Holy Place. It was at this moment they came to the temple, so as to be among the first who should enter.

"But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought."

The high priest's palace was at a considerable distance from the temple; a large number of people inhabited the palace, and these knew nothing of what was going on in the temple at that moment, in the early morning.

vv. 22, 23. "But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within."

"The keepers standing at the doors." There is nothing so awful in the judgments of God, as those things that seem sometimes to render ridiculous all human contrivance.

v. 24. "Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow."

The captain of the temple was an officer about whom we have some knowledge. He was called 'the Man of the Mountain of the House'; the temple itself being called the 'Mountain of the House.' There was a military guard of the temple, of whom the captain was the officer. There is a psalm which was used daily by the Man of the Mountain of the House and his guard. He stood and cried to the guard, "Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord; ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of our God. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord," and the guard answered him: "The Lord that made heaven and earth give thee blessing out of Sion."

vv. 25–28. "And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We straitly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

"To bring this man's blood upon us." The guilty conscience is rising up; the recognition of guilt is small at present as a man's hand, but they cannot help even now referring the miracle, the "signs and wonders," to the death of Jesus. How madly had they made the people exclaim, "His blood be on us and on our children," and now like tyrants and cowards they say, "ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." They had taken it on themselves.

This is how persecution grows, urged on by the guilty

conscience. Persecution is not for the most part carried on by fanatics but by sceptics. When the Spanish and Roman inquisitions were at their worst some of the ecclesiastics who controlled them were not really believers. It was exactly the same case as this.

But S. Peter answers.

v. 29. "But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men."

'You talk,' he says, 'of our bringing His blood upon you, but He is not dead.'

v. 30. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree."

"The God of our fathers"—'You who stand here seem to represent our fathers, but the God of our fathers is He who raised Him.'

v. 31. "Him did God exalt with His right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

How noble and simple—this offering to the High Priest Himself repentance and remission of sins. The Apostles indeed knew in Whom they had believed.

v. 32. "And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

This word is for all time—"we are witnesses of these things."

"Them that obey Him," 'we cannot obey *you* lest we should lose the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him.'

We must go back over the passage:

'They buried her beside her husband,'—what sweeter? But the accomplice wife 'agreed to benefit.'

v. 10. They "buried her by her husband." What sweeter words could be written? but how awful their application to the woman who was her husband's accomplice. There have been wives who have been accomplices in the sins of their husbands worse than this Sapphira who thought she would save a little money and gain credit at the same time for liberality.

I said before we should not look on this as a judgment from heaven merely in revenge for the sin. Ananias and

Sapphira had brought themselves to such a condition that they had caused the life of their own soul almost to cease, and it was time they should be taken away. This is the reversal of Wifehood.

Reversal of Wifehood, cf. 1 Pet. iii. 2, "won by your chaste conversation."

What says S. Peter himself, he who gazed on the paleness that overspread the face of Ananias, and on the relaxing limbs of Sapphira? In his 1st Epistle, 3rd chapter, he says, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives: while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." What a lovely description of what the wife can do only by being in subjection. This it is which glorifies subjection and gives it such endless power. A man is determined on carrying out his own will, he can hardly listen to what is said on account of the turmoil of business and the sound of men's voices in his ear, but he may be won by the sweetness and subjection of his wife.

"Be in subjection that without knowledge of the word he may be won by your chaste conversation coupled with fear." The might of fear and purity is greater than all man's strength.

But it was a reversal of all this when Sapphira suggested or at once agreed to Ananias' suggestion and became an accomplice in his sin. And as all things were being wrought in signs it was right that the death which had passed on their souls should be made visible by a sign.

This Divine (Judgment) consolidates the growing organisation.

We see how this divine action consolidated the organisation when we read, "and of the rest durst no man join himself unto them." This kept back all who were likely to rush into the Church for the sake of such help as would come from the temporary community of goods; but all who were sincere came more and more, and believers were daily added to the Church. This was a reality. When the Church was first formed they might have said, 'Here is a sect starting, and it is the object of a sect to gather to itself as many people as possible; see how they are bribing people to join them.' But no mistake was possible when Ananias and Sapphira died. Everyone who came now was sincere.

It is hard to express in English the exact shade of meaning of the Greek word here translated as "believers." It is not properly "believers" but 'believing ones.' It means that everyone who came in was believing.

I have put on the paper references to various passages which will explain the expression "the rest." The observations of commentators are confusing on this point. They talk of the Pharisees as being possibly meant by "the rest." But if you will look out the passages referred to you will see how this word "the rest" is used idiomatically and somewhat contemptuously; as of those who would be glad to join from false motives, those with whom the body of sincere believers would wish to have nothing to do. Thus the organisation was consolidated by this fearful sign.

Was God *hard* on them?
(1) For Church's sake (not enough).
(2) Not a Judgment—Life had ceased.

But someone might ask, 'was God thus hard on Ananias and Sapphira for the Church's sake?' Well, it was for the Church's sake certainly that this sign was wrought, but that will not be enough for you. And the further answer is that the Spiritual life in these two, so far as this world could do anything for them, was over; so God mercifully would not leave them there to live disgraced and degraded lives.

Look at that passage[1] in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which speaks of those who have come to such a state that it is impossible that anything more should be done for them on earth, who have counted the blood of the covenant...an unholy thing, and have done despite to the Spirit of grace. It is a fearful passage; it does not say that it is impossible for such to be ever renewed; but all that you can do, all the Church on earth can do, is done. There is a "looking for" fiery indignation; they will fall into the hands of God. Farther than this we cannot see, but who knows the mercy of God? All that we can say is that we do not know but that, in some mysterious way, perhaps after ages, they may be brought back; through fearful scenes, doubtless, and by fearful struggles.

But we may not and cannot think that God is hard on the most unworthy soul, or unjust for the greatest cause, even

[1] A combination of two parallel passages, Heb. x. 26—31; vi. 4—6.

for the sake of His own Church. He alone can know how to be perfectly just in cases where there is a thick cloud over all that we can see.

The Consolidation itself. God does care for Purity of His Church. Patronage, Tithes, Courts of Judgment.

But there is another lesson in this consolidation of the Church. It shews that God does care, unto the death, for the purity of His Church; that it shall be pure and purely administered. This point bears upon questions of patronage; the careless, worldly patron who puts an unfit man into a living, sins against the purity of the Church. The patron is charged by God Himself to put in the best man he can find according to his ability; it is a fearful thing carelessly to put in a son, or a relation, or to sell the presentation; to hand over the right of presenting to a living, not caring who is put in. 'God has made me the patron, I have a charge given to me, and I sell the power for money.' Surely He who through His Apostle said 'Did ye sell it for so much?' will look to these things. The Church and clergy are bound to seek right legislation to prevent the care and ministration of the Church from being handed over for a sum of money.

Then the subject of tithes is connected with this. They are the Church's property, and belong to the Clergy for their maintenance as much as the private means of any man belong to him. No man's title here in England goes back beyond three or four hundred years at the utmost, while tithes have been the maintenance of parish priests before our history began. And people talk lightly about giving up these tithes, which are money owned by the Church, as much as that which was laid at the Apostles' feet.

So too with the courts of the Church, which should be for the judgments of the Church, and the trial of false doctrine; to judge the breaking of the Church's law. God cares for these things, and it is the bounden duty of the Church's laity to see that she is safe, and that her judgment is pure. The time has been when the laity have had to recall bishops and priests to their duty. The care of these things belongs to the whole Church. There are many people who do not care about any particular form of truth, and who find it more natural to join themselves to the Church of the country.

Want of earnestness makes some belong to the Church of England—

cheap to belong to it; partly inevitable.

But we have no business to acquiesce in this; it is the duty of every member of the Church to see that the Church as a body is sincere; and this best can be done by every member seeing that he himself is thoroughly in earnest. Think of the picture which S. Paul puts before us when he speaks of the careless heathen, coming perhaps from a feast, his head bound with a garland of flowers, looking in upon the Christian service and being overpowered by their earnestness, so that falling down he worships with them[1].

But the best cure is in our Earnestness which may infect those who come.

Obtain power to be earnest by effort, self-denial.

So it should be with these men; they lounge into the Church of England and live loungingly in it; it is our business to make them feel that God is in it. Perhaps we do not believe it is in our power to do this. The Acts assures us that we shall have power if we have earnestness. When all were sincere then power was poured out—the signs were given. Here is the answer to their prayer, "Grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness...and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus."

And [the Organisation] is reinforced by fresh outburst of Healing Power:

(1) In answer to prayer of iv. 30.

(2) The Healing Shadow.

They were sincere, they prayed for power, and the power came. We know, as I said last time, that this healing power was nothing as compared with the spiritual power. He who made the limb can by a shadow passing over it, if He wills, straighten it. It is not by the shadow or by the hand that the healing is done, but at the time when the Apostle's hand is laid upon the injured man God heals. When the dead was raised or the sick man healed no one thought that the Apostle did it, but that God did it. There was no power of healing resident in the Apostle or given at the time, but as a sign the Apostle prayed and said that God would heal, and God did heal.

But now we should be ashamed to walk by sight as they had to walk then. All this was done then that we might walk by faith. It is only by understanding this that we shall understand the signs which are tokens of spiritual healing.

The Apostles tried to keep the Church pure, so that there was no possibility of doubting its sincerity. Then they could

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 23—26.

pray to God to work signs, and these signs were tokens of the inward spiritual miracles, which God will work by us, if we too are sincere. If in sincerity we pray for spiritual power, the power will come. The outer healing was a sign which was to pass away; the spiritual healing will never pass away. The Holy Ghost who works in us is the same Spirit who was with them, and He desires to make us sincere, and He will give us power. We often think with distress of opportunities we have missed of speaking to some person; we have had a little time with them, an opportunity, and have not taken it. It is astonishing how many times a word thus spoken is not spoken in vain.

Remember that Medical Power is only a *Sign* of a *Better Power* to be obtained by sincerity.

But it is not right to confine our thoughts to individuals only; and these multitudes, remember, who were healed, were not only sick but "vexed with unclean spirits."

(3) The suffering man's πλήθη; and *vexed with unclean spirits* —plenty now.

We hardly know what was meant by this expression; as Christianity advanced, 'possession' seemed to cease in this form; but in a certain sense it has not yet ceased.

If you read about the habits of the lower class among us —Mr Booth's description of the "worthless"—you will see what I mean. The "workless" may have work; the "thriftless" may be helped to keep respectable, but the "worthless," God help them! To say that they are vexed with unclean spirits would be a mild description of the reality; yet they could heal such in the old time. What must we do?

Why do people behave religiously as to Worship but not as to Life?

And how does it happen that those who are so religious in church, who mean to be and are religious there, how does it happen that when these go back into their own houses there is so little difference between them and those who do not keep the divine ordinances at all?

If we answer this we shall have answered the question, 'What is the difference between the sincere and those who are not sincere?' There are many who go to church, keep Sundays, keep the fasts and festivals—who are most devout when they are on their knees; but when these go out into the world again we do not see so much difference as we have a right to expect between them and the rest of their neighbours who are living respectable lives. There is a great

difference between being religious and not caring at all to draw near to God in public or in private. But how is it that there is not more difference in the way these people live? How is it that the one class live lives as worldly as the other?

(1) They have a wrong fancy as to relative importance [devotion in worship and life].
(2) They apply Intention and overcome difficulties as to worship, but do not apply Intention to Life.

Is it not that they think, and think rightly, to please God by devotion, but do not remember that they have to please Him in all their life also, which is more than is included in ordinary religion? The Bible teems with passages, telling that God loves the holy life; there are not so many which tell that He loves religious worship. You intend to please God by your worship, but you do not intend to please Him by your life. You want as much as you can for yourselves, stopping short indeed of that which will too violently contradict your religion; you want riches, dress, worldly society, as much as you can have of these things without giving up religion. You have not the same intention of serving God in life as in worship. If you were sincere you would give yourselves to be penetrated with the life of God. Take care that your intention is as real in the one case as in the other.

This is what constituted the power of the disciples. Their intention was as true in their life as in their worship. Difficult things became natural to them; fear disappeared; when their enemies are most violent they do not pray for protection, but they pray that they may be bold. Thus when they look on multitudes vexed with unclean spirits they are able to heal them.

Pray then, 'Oh, my God, make me sincere.' Then power will come to act.

Is not this something to thank God for?

IX.

16th March, 1888.

Acts v. 29–42.

A. Treatment of God's Truth from within.

v. 29. *Sincerity* in conduct the Way to knowledge of Christ;

Witnessing was still their work always (v. 20) and ours.

v. 31. Growing knowledge of Christ. His relation to Death, to Life (compare iii. 15), to Sin.

v. 32. Signs soon to cease; The SPIRIT never, for the Sincere in Act.

[Mistakes about Confirmation, Acts viii. 17, xix. 6.]

B. Treatment of God's Truth from the outside.

v. 34. 1. Gamaliel's Tolerance.

Tolerance not Indifference; nor Cynicism: These often spring up with a supposed 'knowledge of the world,' and are confounded with Tolerance, and blight the character instead of ripening it.

Tolerance is 1. Certain of God's Presence, Providence, Guidance, guidance of others as well as self. 2. Ready to postpone anything (even such a cry as 'Judæa for the Jews') at His will.

v. 38. 2. The Way of Gamaliel's Scholar: 'Theomachia.'

How it appears in our own life: Persistence, Murmur. Destroys God's plan of life for us, unless He breaks us down. Sometimes He gives way if we will not, and lets us have our own plan at last and for ever.

3. The Way of the Sceptics. Half-repression.

v. *vv.* 29–32. "But Peter and the Apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

This, which we read last time, is the treatment of God's truth from within, by those who receive it and act in sincerity. Now for the treatment of God's truth by outsiders. As in some beautiful drama, we see in this chapter, put together, different ways of treating the Truth.

v. 33. "But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them."

You must understand the full force of the words. It is not a very unnatural way of governing, when those who govern are not filled with God's grace. In Italy, at the time when the most beautiful art, in buildings, in pictures, in literature flourished, which left monuments everywhere of high conceptions of life and religion, it was no strange thing for government to use the instrument of assassination to get rid of people who stood in their way. So to these Jewish priests too this remedy did not seem so unnatural as it would to us; to us who have inherited through so many generations so deep a respect for life, the characteristic of whose nation it is that every man may speak the thing he will. But the old Venetians would have thought their theory as good as our own, and we may help ourselves to realise the state of things in Jerusalem by looking back on the history of Venice which is so much nearer our own times.

And the fact that the Council felt so deeply what the Apostles said only stung them the more.

We may distinguish three different ways of treating God's truth from the outside. The first we have touched upon is that in *v.* 33—they were minded to slay them. The second way we see in *vv.* 34–39, "But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, had in honour" (the

Greek word means 'held precious') "of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while"; he would have a private committee.

vv. 35, 36. "And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do. For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought."

v. 37. "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment[1], and drew away *some of the* people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad."

Here is Tolerance: and notice how in his tolerant advice Gamaliel gives the warning, "Lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God." It is not too great a stretch of imagination to suppose that when he said this he was thinking specially of one of his own pupils. For one of the scholars of Gamaliel's school at this time was Saul, later called Paul, who did not at all take his master's view concerning the Apostles. The thought of him may have crossed Gamaliel's mind even now. Cannot you realise how he might say, 'Saul, my choice Saul, the genius of my College, so finished, so learned, so perfect, is he fighting against God?' We know how that soon after Saul himself found out that what his master may have guessed, was indeed the very fact.

Gamaliel's view then and the action of his scholar are two of the ways in which the Truth was treated.

But for the third way—they all agreed with him; then what did they do?

v. 40. "And to him they agreed: and when they had called the Apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."

[1] The "Enrolment" is that during which our Lord was born at Bethlehem—mentioned by S. Luke (ii. 38-40). On the enrolment, see *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* by W. M. Ramsay, 1898.

This was a half measure, their fashion of carrying out Gamaliel's advice. And now for the effect.

vv. 41, 42. "They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus *as* the Christ."

The word used for beating (*v.* 40) answers to our word 'flaying,' and we know how atrocious such beating was. They then, with bleeding backs and shoulders, departed, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name." "The Name,"—for their love has no need to say Whose name.

This is the usual result of half measures.

We will return now to the beginning. The priests had charged S. Peter with "bringing this man's blood" upon them, and he takes up the charge, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, *whom ye slew*." He is not going to lay the blame on Pontius Pilate, on the Romans, or on Herod, but says boldly, "whom ye slew." As for his own conduct and that of his companions, he says, "we must obey God."

Our knowledge will advance with our sincerity, after a certain point [up to] which [it] is free gift.

Just that one motto, worked into a life, is enough to ensure progress in the truth. Only sincerity is necessary to ensure that we shall go on growing in the knowledge of the truth. Many complain that they are going back in the knowledge and love of God, and never make progress. I never saw but one cause for this, and that was not putting belief into action. If we will take even some smallest determination and carry it out—'I know this, I must therefore make a practice of it. I must be charitable; I must refrain my tongue; I must give myself to God in prayer.' If the thing is ever so small it will have its effect. If the person who says it is confined to a sofa, or is the poorest and weakest person in the world, such an one will never go back in the knowledge of the truth.

And more in proportion will this be true of those whom God has put to carry out some great thing or purpose in the

Knowledge of Jesus still advances. His relations to Death, to Life, and Sin.

world. Thus we see the Apostles speaking more and more clearly about who Christ really was, as they themselves saw and understood it more and more clearly. How S. Peter bursts out, "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince." The word for "Prince" here means 'a leader in the very beginning of things,' one who stands to lead in the beginning and goes on leading to the very end. Refer back to ch. iii. 15 and see what he calls Christ there; he says there that He is "the Prince *of Life*." This Leader is He who begins the New Life, and goes on leading till all men live through Him.

S. Peter had realised then the fearful question, 'Where are we all going to?' He had known the fear of death; he had known the Sadducees' answer to the question, 'Where are we going?' 'Nowhere.' 'Shall we live again?' 'No.' He had felt that the whole soul of poor and rich, ignorant and cultivated, alike cried out against this answer; and he remembered the moment when that doubting—not sceptical—soul hearing Christ say, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," had replied, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" To whom Christ with loving tenderness said, "I am the Way," and not resting there in the simple answer to his question added, "and the Truth"; and, if you are seeking the Way through Death, "I am the Life." What a burst of love to S. Thomas looking doubtfully on the face of his beloved Master, and saying that he did not know the Way, is shewn in Christ's answer, who not only not content with setting his doubts at rest by "I am the Way," went on, "I am the Truth"; and, if the fear of death is keeping you in bondage, "I am the Life[1]."

S. Peter realised this then, that Christ was the Prince of Life, thus early in the Acts; but he goes on now, "Him did God exalt to be a Prince and a Saviour," and this Salvation shall be made over to everyone who shall believe in Him. You cannot be sorry for your sins as long as you look to

[1] Jo. xiv. 5, 6.

yourselves; but to you, His very murderers, and how much more to those quivering souls who only do not know how to be sorry for the past, will He give repentance and remission of sins; that which these are exercising themselves to find will be given them.

The knowledge of Christ had grown with sincerity—the Disciples were ready to do anything they might be called on to do. They cannot, so they say, silence their consciences by saying that they are only doing what the rulers have told them to do, they have a new Revelation from on high and a new statement of Christ's relation to Death, and to Life and to Sin. And what more can you want?

Our death is taken care of by Him. Who that can feel that we are drawing nearer and nearer to death, that the day cannot be far off, and anyhow is quite certain,—who that thinks this can help knowing that the greatest of all things which can be told them is the relation of Christ to Death? and then of course His relation to Life. But the thing most horrible to carry to a death-bed is Sin. Those sins which we have now, are we going to carry them on through the Valley which lies between us and the next life? Here is the answer to that. Christ is the Person in whom all questions are solved. Death is not Death such as Sadduceans speak of; Life is glory; Sin is gone.

If we go on steadily trying, failing of course, but still trying to do what we know, knowledge will come into the soul like the rising sun. And then there is that one thing to do, on which S. Peter touches, "*and we are witnesses* of these things." It is our work as Christians to witness, to tell that He is the Prince of Life, and of the Remission of Sins.

Witnessing still their work and ours. Signs to cease soon. The Holy Ghost never.

And so is the Holy Ghost the Witness of this, to all the dark, sorrowing world; and He will be witness of it in us if we are sincere, and hold our religion, not as a mere theory, but as a principle to be worked into our life; strengthening the lame feet, renewing the feeble life. Individuals may drop away from the body, but the Holy Spirit will be for ever with those that are sincere, and will witness for ever—a perfect Witness.

In darkest times He witnesses with us, and are we ashamed?

But here I must take the opportunity of correcting some mistakes that are often made about the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

The passages I have put down on the papers refer to the first two Confirmations (viii. 17, xix. 6). There are two mistakes made about Confirmation. Some fancy that the coming of the Holy Spirit after the laying on of hands was itself this speaking with tongues and prophesying. But can you really imagine that this speaking with a tongue never heard on earth, or unknown previously to the speaker—that *this* was the Holy Spirit? When we hear in the Bible that the people received the Holy Spirit, it does not only mean that they passed into this unnatural condition, but that they really did receive the Spirit, and that as a sign that they were moved by the Spirit Himself, they spoke with these tongues.

The first mistake then is in imagining that those gifts which are meant to stir up and excite attention, are in themselves the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And the second mistake, very close to this, is in imagining that the Holy Spirit is not given now because the gift is unaccompanied by signs.

The signs were for nothing but to call the attention of the Jews to the matter, and we ought to be ashamed now of wishing for such signs. The essential thing, which the sign accompanied, the gift of the Spirit, is not taken away, for Christ who gives us the Spirit is the same yesterday and today and for ever. The Holy Spirit dwells with us, and if we will draw Him out (if in all reverence I may use the expression) and not close the doors of our lips, being silent when He could speak in us; if we will let Him have His way (and He will not force His way) and listen patiently, we shall hear the still, small voice speaking in us to point us out our way.

Tolerance not Indifference nor Cynicism.

But to go back to Gamaliel's tolerance. It is important to notice how far tolerance is removed from that Indifference which, while it professes to leave us free to take our own way, makes it difficult for us to be religious on account of the coldness of atmosphere which it brings about us. This is

not true tolerance, because it does hinder religion. Be it ever so kindly, and let it intend ever so little to be chilling, we know how difficult it is to express the thoughts of our hearts to a mind of this kind.

But it is not true of Gamaliel's tolerance that it is indifference, and still less is it the cynicism of spirit, which sees in every good act a selfish motive; which in the most unselfish forms of religion will ascribe all power to the foresight which thinks to lay up treasure in heaven; which will not believe in any ardour of love, but which explains all the strength and the sacrifice made for love's sake by saying that such a propitiatory life is lived in order to ensure joy in the life to come. Nor is it at all akin to that cynicism which takes a still lower view and is ingenious in discovering the black thread which mars all the work.

It is a strange thing that the wicked and the cynical think that they alone have knowledge of the world. They think that if all men had more insight they would see everything in the same light as they themselves do. The original cynic lived in a tub, in the narrowest world possible in Athens; and the modern cynics also ring themselves round close with a hard circle and see only a very little way. But if you will think of it you will see it to be untrue that this is the best way of escaping temptation.

When young people first begin to come out into the world, young men, or young married women, whose lives as English girls are so sweet, so fenced round, so cared for even by parents who do not themselves seek for the gift of the Holy Spirit, when such girls are married and go out into the world it seems to them as if their ears were unstopped. Such a girl says, 'This is life; I have looked on it hitherto from a narrow point of view'; and this spirit takes possession of her—and so too with the young man who, coming from his school and college, thinks he sees for the first time what life really is.

It is not in truth these who know the world. Some of the noblest and holiest among us have been those who have had the greatest knowledge of the world; they are those who

have formed the maxims of society which are the most worth having; they form that part of society who hold aloof from meanness and vanity. They are not deficient in the knowledge of the world, only it has but strengthened them. And yet people still confound Indifference and Cynicism with Tolerance.

But this is apart from the main subject. Gamaliel objects to interference, so might the indifferent man or the cynic; but there is this further difference. Gamaliel is certain of God's guidance, he is tolerant because he is certain that the good cause will prevail. The great cry at that time was 'Judaea for the Jews,' and this led away many of the nobler as well as of the vile among them. And Gamaliel, observing the world and the course of history, saw that leaders rose up one after another, and gathered together followers for this cause.

In some ways these efforts were like those of Garibaldi, but unlike in this way, that the work of Garibaldi had God's blessing on it. But in this case Judaea was not for the Jews, because they had sinned and forsaken God.

The Jews were divided into two parties; in the one religion had become formalism; in the other religion had sunk to the lowest point, and the spirit was one of greed and ostentation. But, as the prophets had said, there was still a third party, a remnant, who would listen to the Son of God. Gamaliel saw nothing which gave him reason for thinking that God was with those who cried, 'Judaea for the Jews'; and thus he tells the council to look at the case of Theudas and the rest.

This then is the first point of difference which distinguishes the tolerance of Gamaliel from cynicism. He was sure of God's presence, providence and guidance; and he was also as sure that all honest people were led by God as that he himself was. We often are sure that God is leading us, but we cannot realise that others are led by Him just as surely as we are; we cannot realise that neither we nor they have full light, but that we all walk in the light. When we can realise this we shall become noble-hearted.

And Gamaliel was also ready to postpone any action. The cry 'Judaea for the Jews' must have had a great attraction for him also, as to all those who did not know that God's Son had come, but who read in the Scriptures that the Jews should be rulers in their own land. But Gamaliel was ready to postpone this claim of 'Judaea for the Jews' till God should shew His will.

Here again is another difference between true tolerance and the other two qualities. The cynic and the indifferent man don't believe in God's guidance, but in man's folly, and are ready to postpone nothing.

Then we must look at the other way of meeting the difficulty. We know how zealous this young disciple of Gamaliel's was, how he would do all he could to overthrow the work of Jesus Christ. Gamaliel says, "if this counsel or work be of men it will come to nought. But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

This 'fighting against God' is one grand word in Greek, "θεομάχος." S. Paul did go on fighting against God; you remember what Christ said to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (xxvi. 14). Surely Gamaliel must have spoken with some thought of Paul.

That 'fighting against God' is in every life; it is the last thing to be got rid of, except by some special gift of the Spirit. How difficult it is to watch for the finger of God pointing the way, not thinking how much rather we would have been in some other place or position: 'This work does not suit me; that would have been better for me; there, under different circumstances, I could have been freely happy with God.'

What is wrong with us? Just this only, that we are fighting against God's plan for our lives. Oh that we could lay to heart this, that every time in our life when we murmur, or wish to draw back from what God has given us to do, when we will not frame our spirit to accept the life laid out for us, we are disputing God's wisdom in the life He has given us to lead. Isn't this the thing which is keeping us all

back? How shall we conform to God's will, which is our only blessedness, if we are struggling against the plan of our lives? God means me to be happy not in other circumstances but just in these. It is so good for me, new qualities are brought out in me; but these can only be developed as some beautiful piece of sculpture is developed:

> "Stern the stroke, the dint was heavy,
> Keen the graving of his hand,
> Ere each polished stone was finished."

We ourselves cannot be carved into the idea God has for us except by discipline; and to murmur is to desire God to take away the very thing by which He is moulding us. It is this which will destroy God's plan unless He breaks us down and dashes to pieces what we set up. He chose to do this with S. Paul. S. Paul was riding to Damascus, as some grand inquisitor with authority, and in the midst of it he was dashed to the ground, and God broke in pieces the plan he had set up for himself. It was the greatest blessing ever given to any man to be so utterly destroyed. It is such broken people who, if they understand what God is doing, are able to put together again a character more beautiful than any which grew up unbroken. It is sad for us indeed if God gives way to us. But it is in giving way that He shews His almightiness; He gives way that He may in the end work out something in us.

But we do not know about this; what we do know is that the worst thing that can happen to us is for God to remove all obstacles out of our way and let us die so. When the unclean is allowed to be unclean still, the vain to be vain still, the profane to be profane still, then God has forsaken them. Let us pray with all our hearts that if Christ sees anything in us which is struggling against Him (we can put up the prayer from the brightness of our intelligence, for even if our hearts do not go with it at first they will little by little) He will break it in pieces. Let us pray that we may be delivered, and help others to be delivered, from cynicism; which is unlike tolerance, because true tolerance believes in God's guidance of others as of oneself; and is ready to postpone anything if God so wills.

X.

23rd March, 1888.

Acts vi.

From a true divine Enthusiasm flows good temporal Administration, while 'Sensationalism' is barren of result.

1. Defects brought out by 'thorough men and women' asserting
3, 4. rights, and repaired at once by Fairness, and by *Division of Labour*.

Effects (1) on the Work—The 'spiritual' work concentrated, deepened:

The 'secular' work spiritualised by the creation of

6. A 'Holy Order.' Its relation to our Diaconate.

'Lay-Deacons' would be neither Lay nor Deacons.

(Irregularity actually admired—witness of Fiction.)

7. Effects (2) on the Chiefs. A spiritual advance through this 'Word and Prayer'—culminates in conversions of Sadducees.

8. Effects (3) on the Helpers. Character brought out; 'Power' and 'Grace.' Charge of Revolution. The First Death-Witness. 'Angel face'—of love yet indignation.

Our Teachers paralysed by similar causes—where Christian Helpfulness fails now,

in Perseverance (1) in Habits of Life, 'easiness.'

(2) in Devotion—'Prayer.' 'The Word.'

(3) in working—intermittent.

vi. *v.* 1. "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

The "*Grecians*": the word is used carefully in the old version, as distinct from the Greeks; in the Revised Version it is made still more plain by adding the word "Jews." The word is 'Hellenists,' not Hellenes, to call attention to the fact that these were Jews who had lived a great deal in Greece.

"The daily ministration." It was alleged that in the city where there was much distress in consequence of so many being suddenly thrown out of regular employment, in the daily distribution from the common purse (formed by the contributions of the rich who often gave to it the whole of their property) the Grecian Jews who had lately come were neglected on account of the prejudice against them as strangers. They complained then that this prejudice told against them in the distribution.

v. 2. "And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables."

"It is not fit" means rather 'It is not pleasing.' 'It is by no choice of ours,' the Apostles imply, 'that we undertake the distribution; we have only done so as we knew not what else to do.'

"The word of God": the simple, pure, preaching of the message of God, not of the Bible merely, but of all that God had to teach, and of all they had to tell about Christ.

The word "serve" or 'minister' corresponds to our word 'deacon.'

"Tables": the word τράπεζαι is used not only for tables but also for banker's counters; the banker is properly called a 'tabler.' 'To serve tables' then does not mean to see to the food on tables but to undertake the administration of all funds.

v. 3. "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

"Look ye out": mark the grand, open spirit of fairness about this—'make your own selection.'

"Seven men": there is good reason for this. This mystical

number appears again and again; as in the seven gifts of the Spirit first spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. There is beauty and symmetry in this, as well as a business-like way of approaching the matter.

vv. 4, 5. "But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch."

'Committee' all Greeks or Grecians.

Now mark the fairness of this. Every one of these seven names is a Greek name; the people therefore behaved generously about the matter.

Nicolas perhaps the 'Judas' of the deacons.

"Nicolas of Antioch." This Nicolas may be he from whom the sect of the Nicolaitans is called, which we hear of in the Revelation. Our Lord speaks to S. John of hating the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. It was a half-licentious doctrine, mingled with the teaching of Christ. If this were he it is terrible, but yet again it would be like the case of Judas Iscariot. The fact is not certain, but many things point that way. Mark also the first appearance in this history of the Church of Antioch, which became afterwards a great centre, second only to Jerusalem itself.

v. 6. "Whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

You will remember there is one instance of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, when Moses transmitted to Joshua his own office, but nothing of the kind again occurs for the same purpose in the Old Testament. This is the first time we meet with it again. In the meantime we find it as a great sign of strengthening, and in this sense it is taken in our rite of confirmation. The laying on of hands in healing is a sign given to signify God's gift of strength to the sufferer or life to the dead; and is taken in this sense in confirmation to signify the spiritual strengthening. But it is also used to signify the imparting of spiritual strength with the transmission of some great office. So it was used by Moses, and so it is used here.

v. 7. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

There was an outburst of fresh faith, fresh gatherings in to the Church when the Apostles had taken this step.

vv. 8, 9. "And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen."

There were an immense number of synagogues in Jerusalem belonging to the Jews of different nationalities. The Libertines were the children of persons who had been enslaved and had regained their freedom. They came from Rome, no doubt, where there was a large class of Jews who had been freed. When Tacitus mentions the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius (which S. Luke also refers to), he calls those who were expelled "libertini."

Cyrene was a great commercial centre; Alexandria a great university. Apollos, so learned a man that he was set up as a teacher in opposition to Paul himself, was educated there. At this time the philosopher Philo, under whom Apollos perhaps was educated, was at Alexandria.

We see then how the Church was working. Some of the Christians, the Hellenists, complain of neglect, and the Apostles commit to the people themselves the charge to choose those who shall superintend the funds of the organisation. Then the synagogues attack the men who are appointed to the care of the Christians belonging to them, and they attack especially Stephen.

vv. 10–14. "And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man

ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us."

It is almost the same charge as that which was brought against the Lord Himself. "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple...and within three days I will build another." Christ never said so—what He said was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again." And it is this charge which is repeated against Stephen. But Stephen attempted not to destroy the customs but to bring them back with their true meaning in Christ; and it was of these his accusers that Christ had said that they put away the commandments of God to keep their own traditions. The followers of Christ were they who were teaching the true Spirit of the law.

v. 15. "And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel."

"The face of an Angel." We can tell who said that. Remember that Paul was one of his prosecutors, belonging to the synagogue of Cilicia; and that he kept the clothes of those who stoned Stephen; remember too that he was afterwards the companion of S. Luke, so that it seems likely that we have this touch from S. Paul himself. This must give the impression produced on him by the look of Stephen even while he was seeking Stephen's blood.

Let us go back now over the passage, thinking more deeply of it. From the whole of these first chapters, we see how true this Enthusiasm was. There was no fanatical disorder about it; no fanatical irregularities; no desire to overthrow what was past, to wipe it all out, and start afresh. That kind of desire does not belong to the spirit of order which is of God. Out of this Enthusiasm of the Apostles came their good temporal administration; no sounder plan to meet the distress of the time could have been devised.

From a true divine Enthusiasm flows good temporal Administration. 'God of order.'

Sensationalism is barren of results. Look at what is

happening now with a few who are setting themselves up as leaders among the excited crowds; they are preaching with the intensest feeling, but not one remedy do they suggest for the state of poverty which all deplore; they are not even bringing forward any new facts which are not known to the clergy and the workers who have been toiling for years among the poor, and whose efforts are having effect upon them. The Sensationalist spirit has no remedies.

While Sensationalism is barren of results.

There are three remarkable fictions I have lately read. The scene of one is laid in this immediate neighbourhood where there are churches, with clergy working among the people; with an organisation, needing indeed West-end help, but with people working in it heart and soul. In this novel, interesting characters are brought out, people with much good in them, and religious people, yet no allusion is made to the work of the Church; the writer evidently feels little or no interest in it. It is too orderly, too regular. The conversion, the change of heart, is worked not in the Church, but in an out-of-the-way Chapel.

Irregularity now actually admired—fiction.

In the second book, there is represented a dark character gradually brought to the light, and made a worker in the cause of God. This man is brought into contact with the clergy, who are represented as orderly, careful, sincere, wishing well to the people and working hard; yet all the spiritual good which comes to the cottage-people in the book is described as emanating from the Chapel.

In the third, every element of good, and all that is picturesque in the book, is connected with the Roman Catholics.

Thus all the interest in these pictures of life—which undoubtedly are not without their effect—is made to fasten on irregular organisations. The regular organisation is either not mentioned at all, or mentioned but slightly in passing. Perhaps this is well, and the work is more thoroughly wrought thus, beneath the surface. Yet we may learn from these chapters of the Acts that good temporal administration springs deep; that it is sensationalism which is barren in results.

With what candour do we find acknowledged in the action of this chapter that even in the first blush of its enthusiasm there were defects in the new Church; the construction of the new order proves this. The events shew that there were defects in organisation, and that there was selfishness already mixed with the enthusiastic love for Christ and His people. The defects are brought out by men and women acting selfishly, claiming their rights. The Apostles listen to this fairly, and put it right by a further division of labour, the appointment of a committee which sets about its work as our own committees set about theirs. What is the effect on the work as a whole? That the secular work is spiritualised: that the spiritual work is concentrated and deepened. The secular work is not treated as we sometimes treat it; as if it could be done quite by itself, apart; it is treated as the work of a Holy Order. The Apostles create to do this work the first order of deacons; an order which flowed from the mind of God, who gave the Holy Spirit to these very persons whom the people chose; who gave to them new gifts of the Spirit that they might do the secular work with a new power.

Effects (1) on the work. Spiritual work concentrated and deepened, Secular work spiritualised, by creation of a 'Holy Order.'

So let us be timid and bold. Timid, that is, as knowing that we cannot do God's work unless we approach it in a holy spirit. S. Paul says that we may do the commonest work as to the Lord and not to men. Remember what George Herbert says:

> "Who sweeps a room, as to thy laws,
> Makes that, and the action, fine."

Here begins a Holy Order for all time, an Order which has successors. Do not be misled by hearing people talk of 'restoring the true diaconate.' The true diaconate of that day was doing the work which Jerusalem at that time required; from that time the order has never failed, but what the functions may be depend upon conditions of time and need. The diaconate will never have the functions belonging to the presbyterate, but will have functions of its own at all times. The form which these will take will be different in England from what they were at Jerusalem, different from what they were in Rome. We find Jerome in describing the

The relation of [this Holy Order] to our Diaconate.

deacons of his day, who had the ministration of temporal goods, saying that it was not possible to persuade them to take higher orders; they enjoyed in their present position such a great degree of power.

This was very unlike the first deacons at Jerusalem; our order is unlike both. And the cause of this difference is that history supersedes various functions. Do not be misled then into thinking that ours is not a true diaconate; or that we shall improve the order by bringing in as lay-deacons people who wish to pursue their own occupations, and devote a little time to the service of the Church. That is not what these were appointed to do.

'Lay-Deacons' would be neither Lay, nor Deacons.

Then what effect did this have on the chiefs among the people? A number of the priests became obedient to the faith. Remember that the priests were of the Sadducean body which had remained so immoveable before; which denied the possibility of any resurrection. What new world had opened out on these Sadducean priests? It was much the same thing as if we heard that now in Constantinople large numbers of Mohammedan priests had become Christians.

Effect (2) on the Chiefs. Their spiritual advance 'through Prayer' makes their 'Ministry of the Word' tell. Conversion of Sadducees.

Then what was the effect on the helpers themselves? The first effect was to bring out a great deal of character among them. They spoke with power. People of power are apt to think little of people of grace; and on the other hand people of grace think that power is a dangerous snare; and that it deludes those who have it. People of power think that people of grace are narrow.

Effect (3) on the Helpers. Who help for love, and in Spirit of God. Character brought out "Power," which often despises "Grace," which often thinks power almost an *evil*.

Stephen was full of grace and power. What a glorious combination! We must aim after this real strength, this combination of all that we call power and all that we call grace; we must aim at increasing our mental and intellectual gifts, which give us influence over others. We need not be afraid of this growth in power, so long as we keep in mind God's grace also, and devote our souls to gaining it. People of grace ought not to be unattractive. The word itself shews this; we talk of grace of movement, grace of manner; but here it is used in the highest sense of all. God's grace flows from and leads up to Him.

"Full of grace and power": a glorious description of the Christian character; the very thing that it is possible for you, perhaps more than for any others, to strive after and obtain. Take your gifts, lay them at God's feet, and beseech Him to flow out upon you.

Charge of Revolution. *They*, not *he*, ἤλλαξαν τὰ ἔθη.

The charge against Stephen is a charge of revolution, a charge that he had done what they themselves had been doing, changing the customs of Moses, and the law delivered to the Israelites. Stephen, for a moment, in this position, has a greatness which obscures the Apostles themselves; and no wonder, for in him was that glorious determination that made him ready to be the first witness by death of Christ, to follow his Master with the nearest footsteps. He spoke with a face so full of love, and of indignation, like one of Dante's spirits, that his face was as the face of an Angel.

The first Death-Witness.

The 'Angel Face' of Love, yet Indignation.

Our Teachers too 'in evil case.' Clergy overworked —out of society— 'dull.'

Let us turn back again to ourselves and our teachers. It is often not possible for the clergy to work the change that is much wanted because they need help—and they cannot get this help because of the necessities of the work itself —because they are already so much overworked. Even if they had the time the difference in station renders it impossible for them to go into society and gain the influence there which would bring them help; their evenings are taken up, they cannot meet people and inspire interest about their work. Will we not think of this? Is there not something sad about the thought that it is the hardness and self-devotion of their work which prevents them using influence to get help?

You who have money, time, and opportunity ought to be doing great things, and would if the clergy could tell you what to do; but their devotion prevents their access to you. Where is help to come from? The Church can only stand with pleading eyes and hands and say, "Look out from among yourselves men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom."

Where is their help to come from? "Look out from among yourselves."

I do not want to undervalue work that is going on. Through the Girls' Friendly Society you are having an immense effect; among young men such work is less possible,

yet among them the influence of ladies can be very great. I have told you of the great hall where classes of men were organised; the numbers have now reached 4,500—but this emptied itself as long as the teachers were men. Then ladies took the classes, the hall refilled at once, and has never since been empty.

There are now enquiries on almost every question; attempts to sound the abyss of woe and suffering which lies beneath the feet of the working classes, and which must break out in some way unless it is healed. And the Church does implore that you should look out some whose regard is whole and pure and true, who will be well prepared to meet misery and ignorance which are unavoidable.

Helpers lack (1) Perseverance in Habit of Life.

But that this may be so we must give ourselves to the Word of God and to prayer; we must form and keep up a rule of life, not letting things slide. We know how day after day is spent in a tone and spirit so different from that which was upon us when we first unclosed our eyes. Frequently we have thought we would keep peaceful through the day, and our peace has been marred by some carelessness or little thing, such as looking at our letters before we have said our prayers. We must have then perseverance in our habit of life and in prayer. And may I say here what a power in the household the children's Bible-lesson is. There are now in the Church admirable organisations for teaching the children, and they get great good from it; but they cannot get as much good from this as from the mother's teaching. A quarter of an hour in which the child sees that the Bible is a power in the mother's heart and life is more formative than the lesson delivered by any stranger.

'Easiness.' The day spent quite otherwise than you meant and in a different temper.

(2) Perseverance in Devotion [in the] 'Word and Prayer.'

Then there is an important point about your work for the poor. Many of you are ready to do work among poor girls, but let me remind you that the secret of the power so obtained lies in regularity. As soon as the girls feel that the service done to them is postponed on account of another engagement, they feel their friend has not got it really at heart; that it is not really lasting, not really heartfelt care for the poor.

(3) Perseverance in *Work*. The essence is regularity.

Early mattins.

One of the most effective clergymen I know has morning prayer regularly every morning, almost alone, in the dark. He tells the people not to come to it; says to them, "You can't, I know, leave your work, but I shall be there always; the church bell will ring that you may know that I am there, praying for you; that I am at my work, as you are at yours: and that prayer is going up. And knowing this, will you ask God for me, as I shall for you?" The regularity of that, the certainty that the priest is there always praying for them, gives him almost unbounded influence.

I went to a very large colliery village the other day, and heard of the death of a lady who had lived in a house outside the town, and taken great pains with the colliery girls. She saw as much as she could of them, and she had said to them, "I think often of you on the snowy mornings when you are going to your work. When you go to your work at 6 o'clock I shall always get up and pray for you. And I shall put a candle in the window so that you may know that I am there, praying for you."

The light in the window.

It was a little thing, but it made the girls devoted to her. When I went to the place she was just dead and they were heartbroken. It was the regularity of it that made her what she was to them, and made God what He was to them. They kept themselves pure from evil knowing that the lady was praying for them.

Be regular in the work, however light.

There are three things then to think of. Perseverance in devotion and in any work undertaken; do not let it be intermittent.

Might I dare to add one word more, though I wish to speak as little as possible about myself? I do not like to hear people say that a great number of you come here now, but that after Easter you will make no sacrifice of engagements to do so; that you come because it is a dull time now. Might I ask you to consider if you can avoid such a reproach? Last summer we had some of our warmest offices of devotion after Easter. May I ask you then to be regular? There are some schools at which the boys make it a point to sing as gallantly the returning hymn as the leaving

hymn. The spirit I want is something of this kind. We do have the services in the summer a fortnight, not a week apart. So long as it is worth your while to come at all, the regularity of your coming will be a witness in the world which is so ready to say, 'These Christians are Christians so long as it is convenient, but they will not give up anything for God.'

XI.

18th April, 1888.

Acts vii. 1–53.

The 'Apologia' of Stephen is a 'Philosophy of History' of Judaism.

1–8. The Charter of Abraham: his grant of Territory; The Tenure: viz. Trust in God 3 and Self-Conquest 8.

The History after the first three Patriarchs is a series of Rebellions.

1. The Brethren of Joseph. Envy. 9.

2. The 'Brethren' of Moses. Blindness. 25.

3. 'Children of Israel.' Perversity. 27 (cf. 35).

The Revelation of God to Moses in loneliness :—

Its beauty; mysterious simplicity; CHRIST. (30—32.)

4. „ „ Disobedience. 39.

5. „ „ Longing for 'Egypt.' 40.

6. „ „ Idolatry. 42.

7. „ Even in their Temple Building a false idea. 48.

8. „ „ Persecution of Prophets. 52.

9. „ „ (Climax) Betrayal, and Murder of THE JUST. 52.

The Sum of their History. *Privilege Unvalued.* 53.
The Forfeiture.

Power of Evil Tradition in 'Families.' Accumulation of Guilt and Loss. Could any generation have cut short the entail of sin? God's whole treatment of them shews they could.

I want this time to take the whole of Stephen's speech, although it is a long one; for we should lose much of its force if we did not take it as a whole. And the first thing to notice about it is that it is the pleading of a man to save not his own life, but the life of his judges, their spiritual life. It was plain that as for his own life, there could be but one end to the trial; but it was worth while to try if he could not make such a change of view in his judges that he might set them in the right path. He has no thought about his own life; although he is being tried for blasphemy, the punishment of which is death, there is not one word in his own defence.

In this way his defence is like the Apology of Socrates, in which there is not one word which could induce the Athenians to spare him; the words of Socrates are the words of a man who is sure he is right, though the whole world were against him. If so great a miracle could have happened as that the Athenians should have seen things as they really were, the life of Socrates would have been spared, and so it would have been in Stephen's case. But with neither of them is there any thought of pleading for their own lives.

The 'Apologia' of Stephen is a 'Philosophy of History' of Judaism.

Stephen dashes at once into the history of the Jews, the Philosophy of their history; for he cares less about the particular events than the principles shewn by them. It has never been demonstrated indeed that there are not slight inaccuracies in this speech concerning names and places; and people who hold a wrong idea of inspiration tell us that Stephen ought to have made no mistakes. But if inspiration means that God is filling the mind of man, of what importance are such inaccuracies?

It has never been shewn on the other hand that these mistakes are incapable of explanation; but whether they are or not we do not care. Stephen gives us a general view of the principles of the history; the spirit that animated a whole generation is touched off in ten words: he speaks with the voice of God when he shews the fault through which the whole nation fell; but whether the cave where Jacob was buried was at Sychem or not has nothing to do with the point.

The Charter of Abraham.

The speech divides itself into two parts. The first part is short and deals with the charter by which God gave to Abraham the territory of Israel; gave it as a conqueror divides his land among his retainers. The High Priest asked the question, "Are these things so?" but Stephen sets the question aside, 'I have more to say than to answer whether I have sinned against your special law.'

vv. 2–4. "And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, *God* removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."

This is the first principle of the charter—absolute trust in God, to go where God bids.

v. 5. "And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and He promised that He would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child."

"When he had no child," and when there seemed no possibility that he should have one; this is a second point taken on trust under circumstances more difficult still.

v. 6. "And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil, four hundred years."

Four hundred years should elapse before this charter should be fulfilled.

v. 7. "And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place."

Remember that this nation, whom God said He would judge, was in Abraham's time, and when Israel came out from it, the greatest civilised nation; it possessed all arts and sciences then known; it was the nation whose works seem to us even now stupendous; great in law, with minute regulations about landed property, about the relation of class to class, and man to man; so much was it the only nation that Egypt is taken in the later prophets as synonymous with the world.

v. 8. "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs."

Circumcision signifies self-conquest. This then is the second point of the tenure by which the territory, then unpossessed, was to be held four hundred years later—(1) Absolute trust in God, (2) Conquest of the flesh.

One word in passing about this trust in God. The history of Abraham is an assurance for us through all time that if we set ourselves to act on these principles all will be well with us. What could be more impossible on man's view, than that this country which belonged to many nations should belong, by a tenure for ever, to the children of a childless man?—A childless man was told that his posterity should inherit the land, and as a pledge of this the mark of self-conquest was to be put on every individual. Should we not suppose that when a nation found such a declaration fulfilled, and wore in themselves this mark of self-conquest; when they were living among the fields and vineyards that had been so promised, should we not suppose that that would be a converted nation?

Then when we ourselves have prayed and our prayer has been fulfilled, some great blessing which seemed far away has been granted, some great evil has been averted, are we converted? or is not this rather the case, that when we have

prayed and our prayer has been granted, it is all done in so orderly a way that it seems to us as if it must have happened anyhow, and our hearts are hardened? We ought to add to our prayers this petition that if God does fulfil them He would give us grace in the fulfilment to cling to Him still. We often feel that the sequence of events is so natural that the fulfilment cannot be an answer to prayer.

Perhaps you have read a story which Erasmus tells concerning a shipwreck. The anxieties of the people on board were agonising, and he listened especially to one man who was ready to offer anything to S. Nicholas if he would save him, and vowed a great taper to his shrine if his life was preserved. When he was come safely to shore the man appeared inclined to take no farther step; and Erasmus spoke to him saying that he hoped the vow to S. Nicholas would be paid. "Hush," replied the man, "for I think S. Nicholas did not hear me."

We, too, constantly run the risk of ascribing the fulfilment of our prayer to natural causes; and we shall continue to do so unless we cultivate the habit of thanksgiving. We do not believe that it is God who has answered our prayer, but think that it would have come to pass in the course of nature if we had made no such appeal. So it was with the Israelites; they had to be reminded that it is "not our own sword that has helped us."

v. 9. "And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt."

The History after the first three Patriarchs is a series of rebellions.

Here begins the second part of the defence, and Stephen's aim in going through the history is made manifest. The Charter of Tenure is clear, and the first three patriarchs are faithful to it, but after them the history is nothing but a history of rebellion.

(1) The Brethren of Joseph—Jealousy.

"Moved with jealousy"; you remember the strange dreams of Joseph indicating supremacy not only earthly but heavenly; for not only did the sheaves, but the sun and moon, make obeisance to him. The dreams made the boy vain, and angered his brothers; his father reproved him, yet kept his sayings in his heart; he saw more in it than a mere

dream. The youthful vanity of Joseph made his brethren more jealous; they sold him into Egypt, and you know what came after.

We may ask why God tried the young lad with such visions of the future; why he could not have lived without the passion of vanity which made his life for so long a life of misery.

We cannot tell, but we see the fact that the sustainer of Israel brought the great nation into the trouble through which they went, and which disciplined them; and that, in the same way, in the great chain of events, God was meaning that this vanity should bring on Joseph the discipline through which he went, from his earliest years. God shews in him typically what will happen to Israel.

And then you know the sequel of the story in Egypt, how he goes through awful trouble for that thing which he prized most highly, perfect purity; and how for years he was made to suffer. The boy's excellence and faults are woven together inextricably, like the lines of an old mediæval pattern; he is made to suffer for his virtue, his dreams of ambition are fulfilled, and he is taught to think nothing of them, of the glory and power of Egypt; for his last charge on his deathbed is that his brethren, simple shepherds as they still are, shall take away his bones to lie in the land of Israel.

(2) Brethren of Moses—Blindness.

The first time the rebellious spirit shews itself then is in the murderous envy of the patriarchs. But the time for deliverance comes near, and another man springs up, brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, with extraordinary gifts, and "fair to God" (*v.* 20), as the expression really is; fair and brilliant, nourished up in Pharaoh's house with all that the accumulated wisdom of Egypt could give. And while he was still in Pharaoh's house, forty years before he was called, he delivered one single Israelite from the cruelty of an Egyptian. But he was seen in the act, and when next day he would have reconciled two Israelites, who strove together, the act was thrown in his teeth. Then we have this expression strangely characterising his act, that 'he supposed they

ἀστεῖος τῷ θεῷ.

would have understood that God by his hand would deliver Israel.' God always chooses the right instruments. He did not take a man to be the deliverer who had never thought of it before. The second characteristic of Israel then is their blindness. They think it is no use doing such things; they are *blind.*

(3) Children of Israel —Perversity.

And the third, is their *perversity* (*v.* 27); they are not willing to have a leader; they are jealous of him; thus preserving the old characteristic of the patriarchs.

Envy, blindness, perversity; these are the first three steps.

The Revelation of God to Moses in loneliness. Acacia aflame.

Then Stephen carries his hearers off to another scene (*v.* 30)—the wilderness, and the occasion when the tree burnt, and was not consumed; a marvellous emblem, the bush keeping its green leaves while the flames were working in and out of its branches. Surely the old fathers were not wrong in telling us that what Moses saw was an emblem of Christ, bringing God to dwell in man; the human and divine blended together, and yet the man was not consumed by the presence of God.

No doubt it was Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, who spake out of the bush. If we put together a few passages we are led to infer this. You see how He who speaks in the bush (Ex. iii. 4), and afterwards is called "an Angel," yet speaks as God Himself, "I am that I am" (iii. 14). And in the 23rd chapter of Exodus (*v.* 20) God says, "Behold, I send mine Angel"; so that He who went before them is called *God's Angel*; while here in the 3rd chapter God says *His Presence* shall go with them. Thus He who is sent as an Angel of God speaks as God; and we see that He is one, who being Himself God, yet as God is sent by God; none other that is than our Lord.

Moses has spent years of loneliness in the wilderness, yearning after his people, desiring and longing to be their deliverer, yet feeling it impossible that he should be so; having by his young rashness made his life not worth an hour's purchase if he were to go back to Egypt; thus he is brought to true humility; so that when God says that he

is to bring Israel out of Egypt he says that it is not possible, that it is not in him to do it. This is the time when God has really developed in him all his powers. And the crowning grace of humility comes when, as evening is sinking and darkness is coming over the land, he sees the flaming bush, and hears God send him to deliver Israel; not by a high hand, but to suffer and to free them.

Then Stephen goes on with the history of Israel from point to point; their disobedience, their longing after Egypt, how the idolatry and magic of the other nations runs away with them. Longing for Egypt.

vv. 38–40. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, which led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

When people first know God it seems to them as if they partly produced the thought of Him and might have thought differently. "Make us gods" they say.

Then Stephen touches on what was the glory and triumph of the Jews, the Temple.

vv. 44–47. "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as He appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, which God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favour in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house."

But Stephen does not speak of the glory of the house but goes on, "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands."

vv. 48–50. "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in *houses* made with hands; as saith the prophet,

The heaven is my throne,
And the earth the footstool of my feet:
What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord:
Or what is the place of my rest?
Did not my hand make all these things?"

Even in this building of the temple the evil spirit of the nation came out. They felt as if they had got the Most High, had made Him, as it were, to dwell with them. So the temple could not save Israel, and Stephen goes on to the persecution of the prophets. And then came the climax —the betrayal and murder of the Just One.

vv. 51–53. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

What think you of a man pleading so for his life? Wrestling so with the evil spirit of Israel to try to bring them to the feet of God?

The 'tradition' got stronger and stronger.

Look at the progress then. Envy, jealousy, which breaks out in fiercer flames in the Gospels and the Acts than in Genesis itself: blindness—for after they had been shewn the grace of God they were still longing for Egypt. Then idolatry; building a Temple for God, not without the idea that they could thus make Him dwell with them. Persecution of the prophets, and then the climax; the death of the Holy and Just One.

They were unrivalled possessors of the divine privilege: everything was heaped on their heads, everything wrought for their souls, that heart could dream of. God was sending His messengers to them continually, "rising up early and sending them," pleading with them; from Dan to Beersheba His prophets were raised up, shewing themselves unexpectedly, ready to suffer and to die; men, who put on themselves for God's sake the mark by which they might

be known; and scarce one of His people escaped with their life. "They have killed thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away"; this was characteristic of the people to whom God was so near that Moses says, "for what great nation is there that hath a god so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon Him?" (Deut. iv. 7).

And the privilege given by God is looked upon by the nation as given for their own sakes, as coming to them by nature, as all their own.

Now when we contrast the peaceful aristocracy of our own time with the misery of the mass of the people, how ought we to tremble lest such selected families should have the heart of Israel. How naturally all things seem to have come which have raised a family to a great height, to a position in which it has remained. The opportunity which raised them seems to have come in the ordinary course of social life. How natural that such people should come to feel that they owe all this to themselves, that it belongs to themselves. That never can be the right view, unless Israel also took the right view.

Forfeiture: No country: No national rights: No birthplace right: Their poverty and their riches: Misery and influence.

But think what came to Israel from that view: not merely the forfeiture of that privilege which was not given to other nations, but they were dispersed and yet not dispersed; they are everywhere a problem, everywhere a nation; a thousand times larger than they were when they possessed a country; everywhere the richest and the poorest of mankind; everywhere possessing influence, and everywhere down-trodden. This nation which had a birthright has none. There is scarcely any nation in Europe but our own which recognises their right to live in the country where they are born. What they earn is not their own but is liable to be taken from them. Here they are working in vast masses at work which an Englishman would not touch. They take wages and do work which the English would not do, yet nothing diminishes their ability, even, one might say, their commandingness. Yet one man of these said the other day, "the boast of the English is that they have no slaves: it is the only country

where there are slaves[1]." And he did not lay this all to our fault.

Families, Origin and Possessions.

I saw a great house, far enough away from here, where there is a complete series of portraits of the owners. The first is in the time of Elizabeth, a great merchant and his wife; so shrewd, so governing, so managing. Then the sons, and the grandson, a great cavalier, noble, soldierly. Then a roué of the time of Charles II.; after him a country gentleman; and after him a statesman with a roll of papers in his hand; then the titled owner, in a mantle, with powdered hair and vacant face, carrying before himself on a cushion his own coronet.

Trace the history and think what the man has come to, who prides himself not on his greatness in commerce, not that he is the servant of his country in the way of trade; nor that he is a soldier and serves his king; not one who makes pleasure his aim; nor one who takes care of his own land, nor one who makes laws in the senate, but a man wrapped up in the thought that *he is himself*. So it comes to pass that people who have privilege value themselves in this way.

And as in history we see fault after fault developing in widening circles, so you can know how when a family takes an evil taint it will spread wider.

There was a Swiss girl, eighty or ninety years ago, a reproach to the village, for her profligacy and wickedness, committing crime after crime. The magistrates would do nothing with her, for they would have had to incur the expense of keeping her in prison in the capital. But a hundred and fifty of her descendants were in prison before eighty years had passed; the family was well known, the resemblance was distinct, and someone had the curiosity to trace their history.

I knew a boy at a public school who had committed a grave offence. His father was sent for, and when he came was told what had happened. He asked no questions about

[1] This was probably evidence given before the Sweating Commission, on which the Archbishop was then sitting.

it and pleaded nothing in mitigation; and when he was asked why he did not, he said, "I know all the time the cause of it; when I was his age I did the same thing and I was not found out."

We don't dwell enough on the fact that our sins, our baseness of character, are not confined to ourselves, but go on spreading. It is meet and right that the heads of families should realise this, should see and know what things led to evil in the past, and should correct them. When we see Israel going like a family from worse to worse, let it teach us that it is a law of human nature that this should happen, unless people make a firm stand and cut off the entail of evil.

We may well ask why there is such evil in the very place in the world where most has been done to guard from evil; and the answer is that 'tradition is so strong.' But it is not too strong just for this reason—that the mothers of England are not indifferent to the evil. If they were, the evil would have prevailed, but so long as they hold to purity of life the flood of tradition will not be over their heads.

Yes, but what is the mother's view of her boy?

But we ask, 'What is the mother's view of the boy?' Does she believe he can be kept pure, strong and holy? She has dedicated him in Baptism to God; she does not believe that is a vain act, but what is her view of its power? At first he is her darling, essential to her; then the mother perceives that the boy begins to have his own side of life to himself; she acquiesces in it, she knows it will be so, she does not enquire into it, but she fears. Then she believes that this phase will be over, that he will come back; having a wife and children he will try to bring them up well.

But where are all those years gone to? Where has been her faith in God, her belief in what S. Paul says of Baptism in the Epistle to the Romans (vi. 3—8)? Has she been believing that the boy was buried in Baptism in order that he might not fall into sin but walk in newness of life, being risen from the death of sin? Or has she believed what S. Paul says, Col. ii. 12? Has she had faith in the working of God that He who raised Christ means to raise her boy?

Has she prayed and never forgotten that God would answer her faith—never forgotten that it is her duty to pray the prayers she prayed for him at his Baptism?

She has not *believed* in Baptism about him. The reception by God.

Or has she made Baptism a mere outward ceremony? If so it is no better than heathen lustrations. Does she think it only signifies that he will be born again some future time, not that God is pledged to stand by the boy if those who love him perpetually pray that he may be kept from evil?

How can she expect with no Faith, making it into a *mere ceremony*, to retain him?

If she has never prayed in the faith, not only of what God will do, but also of what He has done, it is no wonder her son is more and more overpowered by the tradition of sin. Surely we need to bring to bear spiritual forces. Israel would never see they could be brought to bear. Believing will work far more than preaching and teaching can; believing, and going to God to break off the entail of sin; yourselves taking your young ones in hand.

Let Mothers cast themselves on these promises.

Israel was determined to sin, but God's treatment of the Israelites shews that He never despaired. He sent prophets to them, and at last sent His Son to speak and to die; and they would not listen, and the outcome is to be seen.

May God grant that any class or any people to whom such privileges are given may understand the value of them, may use them; so that His judgments may not deliver over those, whom more especially He chose to do His work, to separation from Him. But this will not be granted unless they have faith, and unless they work in God.

Read the 3rd Book, 12th chapter, of the Confessions of S. Augustine. We know into what evil Augustine had fallen, into what terrific vice, how his intellect and will had been perverted by the dream of the Manichaeans, one of the falsest of false teachings—and all the while his mother was praying for him. The comfort that was given her was that "the child of so many tears could not perish." You know that he did not perish.

XII.

4th May, 1888.

Acts vii. 54–viii. 4.

The Revelation of 'Jesus' continued in Stephen's dying.

vii. 55. 'Son of Man' in God is Principle, Source, Force, End of Humanity.

'Right Hand.' 'Standing.' 'Receive.'

Dying lends 'Insight' (i.e. removal of *some* limitation):—but not to all men.

vii. 59. The 'Spirit' of Stephen:—

51. Charged with God's Spirit.

59. Its Home.

59, 60. Its Characteristics: True Trust is True Strength: utter Forgivingness. The spirit of Justice (Old Testament) ripens into the spirit of Love (New Testament).

vii. *v.* 54. "Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

"Cut to the heart": this is a strong expression in the original—"sawn through the heart." What Stephen had shewn, concerning their fathers and themselves, cut through their pride of life, and they "gnashed on him with their teeth"—a hideous scene, but Stephen did not see them.

vv. 55, 56. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

"The Son of man standing," not merely enthroned, but

standing in the attitude of action, ready to be the helper of His dying servant.

v. 57. "But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord."

A perfectly Oriental scene; the kind of fury which travellers sometimes describe, in an Oriental town when fanaticism seizes the people.

v. 58. "And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul."

"They cast him out of the city" which was too pure to be defiled by the blood of Stephen.

"The witnesses." It is strange what a change of meaning has taken place in this word. The word used here for witnesses is that from which our word martyr is derived. The martyrs were really witnesses for the truth, so that the word has been confined to them.

"At the feet" etc.: it was no common man, no mere bystander who was asked to look after their clothes; when they stripped off the great upper folding mantles they laid them at the feet of the young scholar, perfectly educated at Tarsus; and he stood there with the firm determination of seeing the blasphemer put to death.

vv. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

viii. *v.* 1. "And Saul was consenting unto his death."

Here we see the importance given to Saul, the great officer of the inquisition.

vv. 2, 3. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles. And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

An almost magnificent persecutor Saul was; entering without scruple every house.

Now what of the event? a grand simple act of heroism for Christ's sake; a most wonderful witness borne to the face of the cruellest judges: and the last word of this witness is, "Lay not this sin to their charge." Dr Arnold says in a letter to his children that it does us good to read the stories of the martyrs, it nerves us, gives us strength and power. He is speaking of great acts of martyrdom in the times that followed these, when men and women of the highest rank, even boys and girls, went cheerfully to death for Christ's sake. He tells his children to read such; and as a great historian, having the gift which historians have, he says that there will be again such days, "if not in your days, my children, in those of your children." Whether or no this be so let us do all that we can to strengthen our spirits, and nerve ourselves to fortitude for Christ's sake.

But we want to go further into the event, there is something in it greater than Stephen's heroism. Stephen saw not the hideous scene of men losing all self-control in the judgment hall, but he saw another judge, Jesus, whom perhaps he had seen in the flesh, standing on the right hand of God—for on the left hand of Jesus was some unspeakable glory in which he could distinguish nothing else. But it matters little if Stephen had seen Jesus in the flesh or not—he would know Him, as you would know Him if you saw Him. And he saw and knew Him, and said, "I see the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

The Revelation of Jesus continued in Stephen's dying.

Then what is it that is more important here than the heroism of Stephen? It is the revelation of Jesus contained in this account. We know more now than we have heard yet of Jesus. I shewed you in speaking of the plan of the Acts that it is not a separate book, but the continuation of the Revelation of Jesus Christ; as at the last our Lord said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, *these* shall He

speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you." (Jo. xvi. 12—14.) Thus in all that is going on in the Acts this promise is being fulfilled, and there is act after act of the new Revelation of Jesus Christ. Observe how much we know of Jesus Christ here which we have not been told in the Gospel. Thousands have seen Christ, more or less truly, when they came to die, but Stephen was the first not only to believe but to see Christ standing to help him through the moment, and to help him much more for ever after.

Do not pass over the force of any word here—"I see the *Son of man*." I have spoken before of the Hebrew idiom, 'son of.' The 'Son of man' does not mean simply a man; but is the most forcible way of expressing one who centres in himself all that belongs to man. As 'son of wickedness' means him in whom wickedness is, as it were, incarnate, so 'Son of man' means Him in whom humanity is incarnate.

We know well that Christ suffered for us, but when we say so we do not mean that He stood outside us, suffering for us; there would be no point in His suffering unless we were one with Him in Spirit; He dies as the representative of Humanity, and rises to the new Life with all Humanity. "If ye then were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above[1]." It is not that Christ's Resurrection is apart from us, but that we are rising with Christ. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God[2]." How? because Humanity dies in Christ that it may rise to new life with Him. 'Son of man' must be taken in this sense, for Christ was not the son of man according to the flesh, but born of a pure Virgin birth,—made the head of our race

The "Son of Man" in God is Principle, Source, Force, End of Humanity. Son before time ...*in* time.

Stephen calls him not 'Jesus,' but "the Son of man." 'I see the representative of Humanity, the principle, the source of it; Him who was the Son of man before time and in time.' We can understand that the Gospel turns on the fact that we are in the image of God, thus that God would have been incarnate whether we had sinned or no; the incar-

[1] Col. iii. 1. [2] Col. iii. 3.

nation was no afterthought of the Godhead, though Christ's suffering and death was the consequence of our sin; but before time was He was to be incarnate, the head and source of our race.

He only gives Unity to Mankind.

This thought we shall see and work out more as we go on.

He was standing then, as Stephen saw him, in the attitude of a Guardian, in the attitude of help, so that Stephen saw in our Lord force, or power. We call this then the principle before time, and the source in time, of humanity; and we may see in Him force to help every human being. Remember the beautiful collect for S. Stephen's day. We can overcome by force from Him who never sits down as if to rest, who is ready for ever to help us. He is our power.

'Stand' at the right hand of God.

Then He is our home. Stephen knew that this world was over for him. Where was he going to? He did not know, but he knew he was safe. The next place in which he expected to find himself was the arms of Jesus. He calls Him by the loving name, "Lord Jesus."

Δέξαι [receive], "*Jesus.*"

This then is the great Revelation. He is 'the Son of man, at God's right hand.' "Standing"—our principle and source of life, our force and power. "Receive my spirit"—He is our End, our home.

Now let us pause a moment to speak of what had here occurred. Our Lord had passed into the presence of God, yet He could become visible, but how? It must have been by some limitation of Himself; by taking away something which made Him invisible to material eyes. Men speaking carelessly of Creation say that God created the world out of nothing. Surely there is no such thing as nothing; God is everywhere, at every moment; God could create all things from Himself, in limiting a part of Himself, by withdrawing from them something which made them wholly one with Himself. And so when creation comes to an end there will be no destruction of the things God has created, but they will return into the unlimited glory of God. Thus here Jesus puts off something of His glory so that He may be seen by His servant who is dying for His sake.

Some Limitation made Him visible—and will again.

Creation and Manifestation = Limitation of Him Who *is*.

Dying lends Insight (i.e. removal of some limitation) to those who would fain have seen earlier.

And dying does seem to give people a certain insight. We see this from many memoirs, in which if we would gainsay the reality of what was perceived at the time of death, we might as well deny that the man ever lived at all. But such vision is only for those who in their lifetime were desirous to have the sight of God,—of whom Christ speaks when He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Those who yearned in life to be God's as much as was possible seem in death to be placed in such a position to God's spiritual world that God vouchsafes to give them a glimpse of it, while still on earth. But the wicked die as tranquilly, though they see no such vision. Physicians say that nearly all people are glad to die, that they have such a sense of failing strength that they wish it at the last; and that the wicked should die so tranquilly has been a puzzle since the world began. Job could not see how those who made no difference between evil and good should die in peace. But from what we know of Christ this is not strange.

But not to those who do not wish. They die unmoved.

Why should the vision of the next world, whether of sorrow or joy, be opened on hardened hearts? they fall asleep in peace to wake elsewhere, but there is no reason why they should have a vision of the place of their waking.

My "spirit": greater word, not ψυχή.

Notice that Stephen does not say, 'Lord Jesus, receive my *soul*,' he uses a higher word than 'soul.' By 'soul,' as we and the Greeks understood the word, was meant that part of the being which animates us, and gives us simple natural Reason. But 'spirit' is that part by which we know and have communication with and touch God. S. Paul gives us this tripartite division, "your whole spirit, soul, and body[1]." So Stephen does not pray God to receive his soul, but that God will take his deepest, highest, inmost consciousness to Himself; so said our Lord when He chose to die.

The "spirit" of Stephen, vii. 59, 'charged with God's Spirit,' 55.

The Acts tell us a good deal about Stephen's spiritual character. *v.* 55, "full of the Holy Ghost." It was by reason of the state of his own spirit that he could be thus full of the Holy Spirit; it was in that spiritual part of his nature

[1] 1 Thess. v. 23.

that the Holy Spirit dwelt. The first thing that we realise about his spirit is that it was full of the Spirit of God, as our own may be. You remember that this same expression is used of him before. vi. 5, "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." So the first characteristic of his spirit is that it was in such a manner in contact with God, that the Spirit of God (if we may be allowed to use such an expression) ran over into his spirit and filled it. But while we speak of him we must remember that the Spirit of God is ready so to run over into our spirits. This is written for us.

The Home [of his spirit].

And the second thing: *v.* 59, "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Jesus was the natural home of his spirit; when it left the earth it went to Him.

Its Character. (1) True Strength = True Trust.

Note in the third place the strength with which he faced people who had never been faced before by such a man. The intellectual effect of Stephen's speech is marvellous; here was a man in one moment brought up to judgment who could run through the philosophy of the history of the Jews, and shew one characteristic coming out again and again—hardness—a stiffnecked people, always making the wrong choice. And the secret of this strength comes here; he was full of faith, of trust. Is it not true to say that all true strength is true trust?

[Trust] (*a*) on 'Self,' an ideal self.

I remember being at a meeting of working-men some time ago. A good many spoke in a really religious spirit. The subject was how they could provide that their children should be really interested in school, and learn to pursue the subjects they had been taught there. One after another told about his past life; and they spoke very religiously, connecting their interest in each case with a sense of their duty to God, their love, or fear, of God. Then a man rose, and in one of the most eloquent speeches of the kind which I have ever heard, he denounced what had been said as nonsense. He said they all knew that they had carved out their own way, as he himself had done. "I rely on my good right arm," he said, "and will until I die." But even there his strength was that he trusted in himself—his strength was trust; for he did not

trust on himself as we knew him, but on an ideal self. The man had an ideal, which yet could be crushed in a moment; a man near me whispered, "I wonder what he would say if he were struck down by typhoid fever." The trust which he had was trust on an ideal person whom he called himself. He was relying on an ideal, not on the limited, feeble, creature with such small powers as he really had; he thought himself wiser and stronger than he really was; if he attained his highest he could not become very wise, very much advanced, but his reliance was on an ideal being, much cleverer, much stronger than he was.

(*b*) Or on Country, "They are thinking of us to-day in England."

Or the Living Past, "Forty centuries"; he had to people the wilderness.

Think what strength our soldiers and sailors, of whom we are so proud, get from Patriotism and Loyalty. You remember how once through a fleet, which had before it a very bad prospect, was flashed the word, "They are thinking of us in England now." Think of Napoleon's braggadocio speech, "Forty centuries are looking down upon you from those pyramids." In such cases men were made to rely on something so much greater than themselves; trust was their strength. It was imagination that was conjuring up for them England, or the forty centuries looking towards them. In the one case the vision was true, in the other false, but in both it was the work of imagination.

(*c*) Or God —which is Reality.

But in this story of Stephen the strength is not the strength of the most perfect imagination, it is simply that the door is opened and the martyr is looking on Him who is, and was, and is to come, standing on God's right hand.

Its Character. (2) Utter Forgiving-ness.

There is another point in the character of Stephen's spirit; it is one of utter forgiveness. This word of Stephen's may be set side by side with the word of his Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The poor Roman soldiers, hammering in the nails, knew not what they did; they fancied they were crucifying a Jewish slave. But Stephen could not make this excuse. They knew, no one better, what they did; they thought they would eradicate the name of Christ. Stephen did not dare to put in this plea for them, but in spite of this he said, "Lay not this sin to their charge." "Let them be free from my blood; let my

He *could* not say, "they know not," for they knew.

The Spirit of Justice (Old Testament) ripens into Spirit of Love (New Testament).

death have nothing to do with their condemnation." "And when he had said this he fell asleep." "Fell asleep," a beautiful word which came in with the knowledge of the true God. Our word for cemetery means a sleeping-place. This utter spirit of forgiving, and desire to be forgiven by all, is the secret of true peace. This is the spirit in which to sleep at night, and to fall asleep at the last.

Stephen's spirit was charged with the Spirit of God; it found its home in Jesus Christ; it was courageous to the last degree; it had the peacefulness of utter forgiveness of the worst wrongs.

Thoughts of Heroism good for us: the last Heroism.

I remember being by the death-bed of a boy. I had to go a long way to see him, and he had one trouble on his death-bed. He was a noble fellow, the son of a great soldier, and had just entered on his university career. He sent for me to ask me this,—"Will you tell me, from what you know of me, if you think I could die the death of a martyr? I know," he said, "that I am going to die here in peace; but I don't feel that I can be serving God truly if I could not die the death of a martyr."

Surely it is a good question to ask. We know that we could die for many a good cause. Could we die for Christ? Are we living with anything in our lives now which would take away our power to do so, which would make us give a fearful answer? If so, must we not take it out of our lives?

> "Shall we then, soft-hearted,
> Seek ease and repose,
> And sing the departed
> In death and stern woes?
> Let such themes of wonder
> Arouse us from sleep
> Lest waked by death's thunder
> We wake but to weep."

If we think that there is anything in our souls, in our self-indulgent habits, our love of the world and its things, which would make us altogether uncertain as to whether we could follow Stephen, let us try to put these things away. We can even here in London, in this century, gain a spirit which, like that of Stephen, shall overflow with the Spirit of God.

XIII.

18*th May*, 1888.

Acts viii. 1–13.

The Third Act of Persecution and its Working.

(*a*) The Victories of the Inquisitor.

The preparation of the earnest unbeliever in spite of self (see 1 Tim. i. 13, Acts xxvi. 9, 1 Cor. xv. 9, Phil. iii. 5)

adds no presumption for the light-hearted, indolent, indifferent unbeliever.

(*b*) Evangelization (Mission)

forced on a self-centred community ('Titled and Wealthy'), a duty which will not be escaped.

(Habits in Aid.)

'Acts of Philip' (Evangelist-Deacon). Town and thence (25) Village Missions.

Signs—Spiritual release, physical restoration.

Topic—Kingdom of God, Name of JESUS (12). Other Gospels.

Organic—Baptism and (17) Confirmation.

Contact with Old Spiritual Powers (Magic etc.) not unreal (Eph. vi. 12) and willing to ally themselves with Christianity (13, 18 *as* in Matt. iv. 9).

(*c*) Simon the Convert in contrast to Saul the Inquisitor.

Fascinating. Popular. *His Topic:* Self.

An 'Adherent' (13) baptized and deeply impressed—with what?

In viii. *v.* 1 we read:

"And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles."

"On that day" probably means something more definite than 'at that time.' After such a speech as Stephen's before the great tribunal, after the rush of the populace in which he had been dragged from the city and stoned, it was no wonder that the persecution should begin that very day, when the people made a rush back with the determination to make an end as they had begun.

v. 2. "And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him."

This shews that the Christian faith had received a rude shock. There was no joy over the death of the righteous, no thanksgiving to God when they carried His martyr home: there seems hardly to have been that feeling which is characteristic of the Christian Church—that they sorrow not as men without hope. Here there was great lamentation.

v. 3. "But Saul laid waste the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

Saul was a most determined inquisitor; he waited not a moment, but entered even into houses.

v. 4. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word."

It was a serious persecution.

We are a little too apt to say with Tertullian that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," flattering ourselves that it is impossible for persecution ever to effect its end. But consider the effect of the persecutions of the 16th century in Italy, and of the persecutions in Spain and in France. If persecution is carried to the bitter end it may succeed. So it seemed at first here as if the persecutors were going to be successful.

But an immense evangelization was the end of this persecution. When the disciples were dispersed they carried the Gospel with them.

v. 5. "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ."

This Philip is not the Apostle, for we see that afterwards the Apostles who were at Jerusalem sent down two of their number to supplement the work of this Philip at Samaria, and do the work he could not do (viii. 14 ff.). This Philip was the deacon, the father of the four virgins who prophesied (Acts xxi. 9).

vv. 6–8. "And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city."

It seems almost as if this touch of "joy in that city" were put in as a contrast to the sorrow at Jerusalem. The sorrow of the mother Church became the joy of the new-born daughters.

vv. 9–10. "But there was a certain man, Simon by name, which beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great."

This word "power" used by the Samaritans is the word that means 'angel' or 'spirit' or 'incarnation.'

vv. 11–13. "And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed."

Any one who will read these verses with a feeling heart and understanding mind will see that a great change had taken place in the world. These verses contain the account of the beginning of a state of things which could only end

in a triumphant God or a triumphant Satan. It is a great choosing-place in the world's history.

We must break up the narrative into its chief parts.

(*a*) *The Victories of the Inquisitor.*

Saul had a glorious success. He so distinguished himself by his zeal that he was sent, a little later, with great authority to Damascus for the same purpose. But all the time that he was acting in hostility to Christ he was being prepared for Christ's service; all the while that with cruelty in his heart he was carrying on this unscrupulous execution he was being prepared to be a chosen vessel (ix. 15). So terrible was he that when he was blinded, and the Lord gave Ananias a distinct order to go to him, Ananias was afraid; and the Lord said, "Go thy way, for he is a vessel of election."

Saul's preparation in spite of himself.

There is great matter for reflection here. There was no man so fitted for his work as S. Paul, a Roman citizen, perfect in the rights of citizenship and in all that cultivation could give; a perfect doctor of the Church; among the Jews a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the straitest sect of the Pharisees, and he adds as one of the perfections of character of a great Jewish authority, "as concerning zeal persecuting the Church" (Phil. iii. 6). Thus it was in spite of himself that he was being prepared to be a vessel for God's glory.

Can we lay this thought as a consolation to ourselves? May we say, "At present I have not been called by God, so I will go on my own way until He calls me as He called Saul; and Saul arose and devoted himself to God's service, as I also will do."

This answer I have had given to me in certain parts of England by men who had many qualifications for God's work, but who were only doing harm; by young men with character and force who might have been noble servants of Christ. "Of course I know I should go to heaven if I were to die to-night, but I have not yet heard God's call; if He calls me I shall go."

This is a coarse way of putting it, but is there not a subtle and refined way of thinking the same thing; thinking that perhaps all the time, through carelessness and selfishness, through pride, and many other faults which we condemn, God may be preparing the way for us to become something higher and holier, and that when He gives the spark the fire all at once may kindle? Is it not possible to go on from day to day saying that we do not feel we have reached the point at which we can forsake all for God, but that though we are indifferent God is preparing us?

It is only the earnest who can be so taken up and moulded.

Surely this view is not a true one. The fitness of S. Paul consisted in this, that he did with his whole heart what he thought to be right. He thought it right to destroy the name of Christ (xxvi. 9) and he did that with energy. But Christ loved him, and drew him to Himself, and spoke to him. Christ never speaks so to the careless and indifferent who go on from day to day thinking that they will be in earnest by and by. The right interpretation of S. Paul's conversion is that which he himself gives; although he was consumed with violence and zeal against the name of Christ, though he calls himself a blasphemer and says he is not worthy to be an Apostle, yet he accounts for the fact that God called him by this, "I did it ignorantly" (1 Tim. i. 13). He is a man in earnest. "God counted me faithful; He knew I was true to myself, that I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

That is the key to this character; this sweeps away all hope that if we are careless and indifferent God will convert us as He converted S. Paul. He converted S. Paul because he was a man in earnest. Read in the Acts how he "was for compelling" the Christians to blaspheme (xxvi. 11) and the passage that follows; through all, the earnestness, simplicity and integrity of his character comes out; he 'thought that he ought' to do many things contrary to Christ's name, as he says of himself.

So let us feel that there may be many warring against Christ openly for whom there is more hope that they will be servants of His in the day that He calls them than for many others who are calling on Christ's name, but though doubting

are not troubling themselves to wrestle with their doubts. It is only the earnest person who can be taken up and moulded by Christ Himself.

(*b*) *The Evangelization.*

The work of this persecution was the evangelization of Judæa and Samaria—of two-thirds of Palestine, that is.

So it is still. When the Christian bishop Hannington was put to death[1], the persecution did nothing but produce an immense crop of Christians. Those who were being put to death called to the heathen about them when they were going to be burnt not to be afraid but to believe in God as they themselves did. So God raised up another to tread in the steps of Bishop Hannington—Parker, who went because Hannington had died. Now he, too, is dead, and another still more gifted is ready to tread in his steps[2]. Thus persecution has served in most countries to increase the Church.

Evangelization forced on a self-centred community.

Then there is another noticeable point. This persecution proved the greatest blessing to the Church in Jerusalem as well as to those who received the Gospel from Jerusalem. The Church would otherwise have been a self-centred community in Jerusalem. It had God's ancient promises, and God's Son had lived and died there; people would have come from the ends of the earth to see it. But this thunderbolt, falling in the midst and scattering the Christians, blessed them and others.

It will be forced on us, on the Church of English wealth and rank.

Do you not think there is a danger here in England that there should be a self-centred community—that those who are themselves enjoying the knowledge of Christianity never will make known the Gospel to other nations unless some great grief falls upon them? Do you remember how I read

[1] *Hist. of C.M.S.* III. 413.

[2] Bishops of Eastern Equatorial Africa. Bp J. Hannington, consecrated 4th June, 1884, killed 29th October, 1885, Bp H. P. Parker, consecrated 18th October, 1886, d. 26th March, 1888, Bp A. R. Tucker, consecrated 25th April, 1890.

to you a year ago[1] the account of the contributions of the wealthy and titled classes to Missions? There are 7000 people belonging to the titled classes, and the whole sum raised by them for the C.M.S. (the largest and wealthiest of the missionary societies) was £1065 in a year; far less was raised for the S.P.G. Whereas the Sunday School children of England raised £5000 for the purpose; and by far the greater part of the £200,000 a year which the C. M. S. possesses was raised from the middle, lower middle and poor classes.

It has been argued that although the names of the titled classes do not appear in the lists of these societies, yet that in their own homes they subscribe a large sum, so that the £1065 represents really nothing of their subscriptions. But the people who conducted this investigation went further (I should beg your pardon for speaking so plainly but that these figures are published everywhere). They enquired in a large number of places where people of rank lived to find out the amount of these more private subscriptions and found that they made no appreciable difference to the result. Similar enquiries have been made about the wealthy classes, and it is found that neither the wealth nor the rank of England has for many years past given any real support to Missions. You yourselves know if people of rank and wealth give, as has been asserted, in private. Do they send thus any considerable sum which you can set against the absence of subscriptions in the list?

But this is not because they are irreligious; as compared with other classes they do much to promote religion. If then we take the whole people of England from one end of the country to the other and see that those who have rank and means give so much less than their due proportion; since they make no exertion to do what is necessary in order to carry the teaching of the grace of the Gospel to all men, does it not seem as if this part of the community were satisfied with itself, self-centred?

People have ceased to believe in the foolish talk about

[1] In 1887.

converted natives being worse than the heathen; a Christian village in a heathen land is like daylight after night. We know that the dregs of Christian society are finer than the new wine of the heathen; we know that the greatest benefit that any society can confer on any other is to teach them Christianity; and yet we do so little.

People are very independent one of another. It is extremely difficult to prevail on them to act together, to undertake together any good causes; they are afraid—as no one need be—of compromising their independence by combination; something makes them unwilling to pull together even to draw the chariot of Christ through the world. They stand by and see others do it and have no part in it. It is very difficult to some to avoid thus keeping aloof; but they ought to look on the past in a larger way, to see how the community of Jesus, when it was likely to become self-centred, was scattered abroad. Are there not fears of such scattering here? Is it not possible that He who judges hearts is saying, 'There are no people so free, so strong, so rich, so set in the centre of the world, with colonies, dependencies, dominions to contribute to their dignity and their wealth; there has never been such a community as England, never such a class as that at the centre of the community; and there has never been a class which has so poorly used its opportunities of making Christ known over the world'? Must we not fear lest He should say, 'It is the time for scattering'? And do we not know that scattering forces are at work?

A duty which cannot be evaded—it is being forced on us.

If our benevolences flow in some strong channel, all is well, but if not we are in much danger. There are certain habits of reflection which we may use to aid us, habits which may easily be taken up, and ways in which such reflection may be made real. Can we not pray that Christ may be the Saviour of them that are in darkness? Can we not give five minutes each day to read something about Mission work, and to pray Christ that as our Master He will shew us what to do? It is necessary to put mechanical pressure on ourselves to keep up such habits. It is often recommended in

Habits in aid.

Fixed regular daily thought.

old books that at 12 o'clock we should make our prayer, and that we should have a particular place in our room at which to pray for some special cause. Such another mechanical habit is that of taxing ourselves when we receive sums of money, putting one-tenth of it to a separate account; and another that of fixed reading on some subject of divine work. It is necessary to make such definite rules though we may smile at their smallness, but it is those who make small rules, those who will have their appointed time for praying, for setting aside money, who are really serviceable; those who feel that at any time they may be generous, do not do the work but put it off.

Fixed self-taxation.

Fixed reading.

I know how difficult it is for some people to make prayers for themselves; there is therefore one other habit for prayer which I would recommend—that you should have a book of devotions but not rely on them entirely; read your book for two minutes, perhaps, and let the words pass through your spirit, then close your book and for two minutes more make a prayer for yourself. Probably you will be led on to take more and more time for this. Twelve o'clock, three, and nine, are the hours that have been generally advised for hours of prayer during the day, and it is a comfort to feel, when we pray, that our brethren, too, are lifting up their hearts with us. Those who do even such small things as fixing hours and times, fixing what proportion of their money they ought to afford, using a book of devotions to launch them in prayer, are the characters which Christ will take and make good use of in His own time; for He sees how the heart is trying to love Him, how weak and unable it is to do so, but how much in earnest. But if we neglect such little things we only get weaker and weaker.

Notice in this chapter how evident are the marks of a crisis. Christ told the Apostles He would be with them so that they should know His presence. So here: when Philip went down to Samaria he probably did not know that he could work miracles, but the people who were paralysed came to him. We know what Oriental beggars are, and there were among them that awful class of people who were possessed

Acts of Philip the Evangelist Deacon.

with unclean spirits; perhaps Christ's name has driven these spirits from the earth, for such possession seems more than mere madness. But, in any case, whether it were madness or possession, this condition left them when Philip laid his hands upon them. It does not seem like madness from all the accounts we have of early writers who speak of having seen the unclean spirits commanded to go forth, and of their departure with a loud cry. It is not possible to doubt these accounts more than any other historical narrative; but taking it at the lowest, madness, paralysis and lameness departed at the word of Philip. The visible effect of the healing was a spiritual release and physical restoration; for even if this were madness it manifested itself in an awful, inexplicable, inhuman kind of wickedness, and this ceased with the healing touch. Like the man in the Gospel, those who had been possessed were clothed and in their right mind.

Signs, spiritual release and physical restoration.

Then mark the topic on which Philip preached, not on miracles, not on himself, not on the deliverance he came to work, not even on the organization of the Church, but on the Kingdom of God and the Name of Christ. The organization of the Church was sure on that basis if it were a divine organization. Philip's first care was to preach the Kingdom and the Name rather than to form the Society; but as soon as this was formed on the foundation of his preaching it was organized with the rites of Baptism and Confirmation.

Topic, Kingdom and Name.

Organic, Baptism and Confirmation.

Mark these three points. (1) The signs which accompany the teaching. (2) The topics of the teaching. (3) The immediate drawing of the lines which form the holy society.

Then comes at once the contact with spiritual powers of evil. Nowhere in the New Testament are these possessions exhibited to us as impostures. So far as we know they do not exist among us now; they may do so, but it may also be that it is impossible for evil spirits to exercise physical power in the presence of real believers, among Christian families or in Christian societies. It may be as impossible for demons now to exercise physical power over those who love Christ, however weakly, as when Christ Himself was on earth; when the very sight of Him made them say, 'Let us depart.'

Contact with old Spiritual Powers.

There are several passages in the New Testament pointing to such powers as enemies which Christianity had to contend with. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, after he has been speaking to wives, husbands, children, servants, St Paul says (ch. vi. 10—14), 'Temptations beset you, and they are not limited to such as arise in your own flesh, nor such as come from others.' He plainly would have us not forget that we contend, not only against flesh and blood, but against formidable powers, so ordained and arrayed against us and our Lord that they are called "principalities," "powers," "world-rulers," "spiritual hosts of wickedness." When we are trying to live with Christ, to live most conscientious and holy lives, even when our minds and hearts are in heavenly places, these great powers are struggling against our spirits.

(*c*) *Simon the Convert, contrast to Saul the Inquisitor, Fascinating, Self-asserting, Popular.*

Then if men surrender themselves to such powers they can become, as the New Testament teaches, their instruments and vehicles, and do very wonderful things as their agents. We should not be wiser but more ignorant if we said that such evil manifestations were impostures. We know not how far the antient oracles were like these, or the things observed in our own time among the heathen. Even if it were shewn that *now* ninety-nine cases out of a hundred were impostures, still what is now imposture is an imitation of what once did exist: and who dare say that it does not now exist while St Paul's words are on record? Philip came in contact with these powers. These powers did much in human affairs, and Simon was given over to them, and believed they acted through him. He practised sorcery and was able to do work which astounded and misled the people, so that he was called "the great manifestation of God." Nor is it unlikely that what he had heard led him to do this, and to appear himself in Samaria, where Christ had produced such effect, as "the great power of God."

These powers were willing to ally themselves with Christianity; and as the tempter came to Christ so Simon came to the disciples and offered to place these powers at the service of Christ if they could be taken in. Was not the coming of Simon a great joy to the Christians? "Simon also himself believed," he knew that God was working in the Apostles, and he went about with Philip as an adherent, a baptized, believing man. Was he not a lovely contrast to Saul the persecutor? ready as he was to give up his magic and place it at the service of the Apostles who, like the rest, were filled with joy and wonder at what Philip had done.

Adherent. Baptized and deeply impressed—with what?

This puts in fiercest colours the contrast between the man who is in earnest and the man who is not. Saul was in earnest with all his hostility to Christ, Simon was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter."

More important than that most astounding revelation of the spirit world is this which we can learn from the contrast of character. To seek God is to be a chosen vessel; but to seek our own selves and put ourselves in the place of what is good and holy leaves us in the gall of bitterness.

How could Philip have baptized Simon or have been persuaded that he believed? Because in truth he did believe. He saw that signs were wrought by the power of God. No man ever believed more, but he believed without repentance; without repentance for the past, without love to Christ whom he saw to be so great, so noble, and so holy. Therefore his faith was his condemnation.

He "believed." Faith without Repentance and without Love.

I cannot help shuddering when I hear preachers ask their congregations, "Do you believe Christ died for you, rose and ascended for you, will you give your hearts to God, now?" Of course we feel that we will, and so did Simon. But "Are you sorry for your sin? Will you undo the evil that was so profitable to you?" "I cannot. I will not." "Will you give up that habit?" "I cannot." "Do you love Him?" "I haven't made up my mind."

These answers are given by the man who is not in earnest.

But if the man is in earnest, in spite of all he has done against God, he is a chosen vessel; for there is an infinite difference between doing evil, meaning to do right; and doing right without striving after it, without taking those little pains that shew our work is in earnest.

XIV.

6th June, 1888.

Acts viii. 9–25.

Marked Difference between

v. 7 (*a*) The Miracles preparatory to Baptism

vv. 15, 17. and (*b*) The Miracle at Laying on of Hands.

The significance of this.

Laying on of Hands the sign of strengthening. (Mark viii. 23, etc.)

The Gifts of the Spirit not external; not to be confused with the then sensible Tokens of the Gift. (Gal. v. 22; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 22.)

Simon in love not with the Gift but the Tokens. The man who 'sees' venality in all, and something not holy in the Holiest. The bitterness and narrowness of such men (23, 24). Even they still forgivable (22).

Two daily Miracles still wrought in the Church which are 1. set forth in Two great Rites with distinct Blessing, 2. worked out in daily life. These are

(*a*) Restoration of Humanity.

(*b*) Strengthening of 'little ones' in Faith—Conduct.

Special office of Church-women such as in Acts xvii. 4, 12. Their qualities, and the means within their reach.

Acts viii. *vv.* 9–25. Philip, the evangelist and deacon, is at Samaria; and in the 6th verse we read last time of the attention with which he was listened to when they "saw the signs which he did."

Then Peter and John, Apostles, not only evangelists like Philip, are sent to them.

vv. 14–17. "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

We have read and dwelt on parts of this chapter already; this is really the chapter in which we learn of the Holy Ghost coming near to us in daily life. Apart from what has been already said, notice the difference between the miracles preparatory to Baptism and the miracle at the laying on of hands. The preparatory miracles *inviting*, making them feel the Holy Ghost was there—of what kind were they? They heard cries from other beings than the victims, these beings came out and were no more there, the character of the man was changed, the palsied and lame were healed. These miracles which invited them to receive the promises of God and become Christians, were the miracles of the *Restoration of Nature*, the restoration of people pressed down below the natural level; and their greatest limitations were lameness and palsy. Now though blindness and deafness are such deprivations, to some of us they do not bring home as lameness does the sense of being *tied and bound* by sins. Blindness has compensations, beautiful characters are produced by it and by deafness; but there is something so distressing in lameness, the inability to move about the world, its check and restraint above all on those who would have been joyous children. It makes us more fully understand our Lord's words of compassion to the woman "whom Satan hath bound." Palsy is a limitation of the same kind; under this

The miracles preparatory to Baptism.

affliction life is already half gone, we are half dead. Think of the tremendous nature of these restrictions—the half death of paralysis, or the possession by spirits and demons. This is a depression below the nature which the creature of God has a right to. Possession took hold of the pulses and sensations, perverted the best feelings, made the best loved things hateful, the presence of the loved ones unbearable.

These miracles were signs to those who were not Christians; who were *first* persuaded by seeing these poor souls lifted up again to their first purpose, lifted up to the level of men, their self-control and freedom given back. The Restoration of Nature was what Philip came to teach. He spoke of the washing of sins, of the renewal, the new birth into a state of self-mastery; all this is *restoration*; the signs were the signs of restoration. The Samaritans saw that he could restore limbs to their natural condition, and they believed his teaching to be true about the restoration of the *spirit* to the new life and joy for which God made it.

The Miracle at Laying on of Hands.

Then after they were baptized the Apostles came and confirmed them[1], and they received the Holy Ghost. This was accompanied by signs and tokens, by the gift of tongues; so that they were able to teach those whose languages they had never learned[2]; the separation and curse were removed for them and so all tongues were one.

As Baptism was the Restoration of Nature, so Confirmation shewed the Holy Ghost lifting them *above* nature; the signs were preternatural and supernatural, endowing them with powers which by nature they could not have.

This is the great difference then between the miracles preparatory to baptism, and the miracles at the laying on of hands. Those who received the first were restored to the gifts of nature, by the second they were lifted up above every gift which by nature they could have. As the inner meaning of the restoration of the palsied and lame is the new birth of the body, so the gift of these new powers to the intellect

[1] The passage commented on was one of those which the Archbishop, as Bishop of Truro, appointed to be read at Confirmation in Cornwall.

[2] Refer pp. 26, 276.

and the lips taught that the spirit of man had not reached perfection in Adam before the fall, but that God designed for man a higher life still to which nature had nothing to say. By being born again they were restored to a state of nature; by the gift of the Holy Ghost they were raised far higher, they were made partakers of God.

The Gifts of the Spirit not external.

We must be careful never to confuse the signs and tokens of the Gift with the Gift itself. Some preachers talk of the coming of the Holy Ghost as if the *point* of the coming were the receiving of tongues. This gift of tongues was nothing but the outward token that God was at work. What was the speaking with tongues? It was nothing in itself, it had no adequacy but to attract, it was a startling sign to draw attention. *That* was not the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. People are sometimes instructed to distinguish between the outer and the inner gifts of the Holy Ghost, but this is unworthy. How are they then to grasp the fact that the Holy Ghost becomes the *inmate* of the heart? The gift of the Holy Ghost does not mean the gift of speech in strange tongues; the Holy Ghost is the inspiring power of God to dwell in our souls to make us the temples of God. The sign of tongues was a magnificent sign, one which no amount of Simon Magus' wealth, no skill could produce; but it was only a sign. There is no truth in this comparison of the outer and inner gifts. We must only speak of the gift of tongues as the *sign and token* of God's new Presence at work.

These gifts bring the Holy Ghost very close. First, the restoration of our nature, the soul, intellect and body, to the level of Adam before the fall. The second, far more wonderful, the uplifting of souls and spirits by a likeness to Him only produced by His habitation

To convey to the minds of the new converts the certainty that He was with the new teachers, He gives them wonderful insignia. Peter and John lay hands on the newly baptized and God makes it plain that they receive the Holy Ghost. Every sign is for that purpose, that the people should see that they received the Holy Ghost.

For our refreshment, strength and hope let us see what

the gift of the Holy Ghost really was. Once let us take that into our heart and we never shall be confused as to the outer and inner gifts. Look at the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians *v.* 22. The fruit of the Spirit is told us as three beautiful triplets of qualities that began to flow into the souls that received the Holy Ghost—all jealousies all party-strifes melting into love; no gloom here, no gift shutting out joy, for the second effect of it is joy: then peace within, peace with God: longsuffering, the being able to put up with other people: kindness and goodness that shall make them bless our existence: faithfulness that can never be shaken: meekness like the great lawgiver's: and temperance, the perfect self-restraint. Read through these nine, and see if the Apostles could mean that the Gift of the Spirit was nothing but the outer tokens.

Look again in 2 Cor. i. 22, where the sealing is spoken of; and see again what is said in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 13, 14). The Ephesians remembered S. Paul's first teaching, when he laid his hands on the converts, and they received the Holy Ghost, as it is described in the ninth chapter of the Acts. So in this letter to the Church he alludes to it. "In whom having also believed" (that is when they became full Christians, not only converts of John the Baptist) "ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." When they believed came the sealing by the Holy Spirit, the earnest of their inheritance here, the *redemption* of God's own possession; the word literally means the bringing back of property made over to us by another. Then in chapter iv. *v.* 30 he makes a touching appeal to those who have received the gift:—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye were *sealed*." They had been sealed to the day of redemption; they were not to grieve the Holy Spirit who was so close to them, who had entered into them.

We have this gladness and certainty that the Holy Ghost, the same to-day as yesterday, is in every one of you who has set the doors of the heart open to love and joy and peace. Not one such can be without Him. No one can believe that Jesus is the Christ, without God, for we can only believe

Him by the help of the Holy Spirit[1]. Then through all trials, all fears of future misgivings, we can see that Light, and struggle after it; the will to do so can be strengthened if we commit it to Him and ask Him.

And we must learn the other side which will help us to understand the joy and the certainty better.

vv. 18–24. "Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me."

This man of the world, converted by S. Philip, *continued* with him, '*stuck* to him' in familiar rendering. That man *did* believe. When Peter and John came he had no fear of seeing them, his whole mind was possessed by these thoughts, he had no timidity; he keeps company with them, joins himself to them.

Simon, the fascinator, in love not with the Gift but with the Token of it.

He was a fascinating person as we know also from scraps of antient literature, a man of immense influence, who had, or pretended to have, intercourse with beings of other worlds, very popular, always preaching of himself. S. Paul is always putting himself out of sight as not fit to stand with the others: they so faithful, I persecuting and stoning, "not fit to be called an Apostle," says S. Paul. And this is his constant note, that he had received mercy *being nothing worthy*; it is his sentence that we have in the Communion Service—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; he cannot utter it without feeling the immense worlds between him and Christ—"to save sinners of whom I am chief." 'No

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 Jo. v. 1.

one has so wickedly and constantly lifted up his hand against Christ as I.'

His topic Self. 'I am the great person.' 'Let me give the Spirit.'

Simon, on the contrary, gave himself out to be some great person, spiritually great. People laid hold of this idea, and called him "that power of God which is called great." Look at the bold, masterly touches of his character. How all with him is *himself*—this even at the last dread moment, "Pray for *me*."

How fascinating, how egotistical he is, preaching himself as a great power of God, like a man of the world moving from place to place. See what insight he has, what wisdom. When he sees the signs of the gifts of the Spirit he admires, 'This is a great gift, oh, that I had the power to bestow it!' And the man of fortune offers money, no small amount, depend upon it. 'For God's purposes,' he would say, 'for missionary work, for the poor starving people at Jerusalem, for whatever you want, if only you will give me this power.'

The man of the world assumes the venality of all.

He believed "everyone had his price," as Sir Robert Walpole said. We see the cynic, the man of the world, quite sure he could get what he wanted if he only could bid high enough. Isn't it natural and what we might expect if genius had had to strike out the idea of the story?

Let us go further.

Sees something not holy in God.

The soul of a man who believes that there is no such thing as human virtue, no man or woman whom diamonds and rank cannot buy, believes something of the sort about God too. There is no real goodness in the mind of such a man. He is incapable of realizing goodness. This man did think Christ, His signs, the Holy Ghost, to be true. But if he thought that the Apostles could be bribed, he thought the same of the God who would agree to their parting with their power to him for money. The very idea of God had come down so low with this man, that he believed that He would consent to the Apostles receiving money and reckoning him as one of them because of the munificence with which he was ready to meet the Church. David recognises this possibility, "With *the holy* thou shalt be holy." It is only the holy who think God to be holy. "With the froward thou shalt learn

frowardness." And in the Revelation is the same idea, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still." There comes a moment when he must remain so; everything has been done for him but he would not change. So let them be—the filthy, the righteous, the holy.

Ah, we cannot fathom that. It does seem to say with the final Voice of the Angel[1] that we can fix ourselves at the last, as spirits, not as human beings, permanently in holiness or in filth, in injustice or in righteousness. Thinking badly of others, though so many pride themselves on thinking badly, on taking a low view of human nature, will end in a low view of God. If you will continue in this, it is impossible you should know God.

Such worldliness gives a bitter taste to all. A constrained soul.

Is not this a wonderful touch in *v.* 23, characteristic of S. Peter, that he speaks of Simon as in the gall of bitterness. Yes, this fine, fascinating man was in bitterness; he thought low thoughts of the Apostles of God and it was to him a bitter taste like gall; he spoke cynically—with a bitter taste. He was a poor thing in bonds, he could not move freely; he was constrained, he could not go right; he was tied hand and foot to earthly things; he wished to soar but was tethered. A bitter taste in his mouth, and a terror which held him fast—the gall of bitterness.

Even he still convertible, forgivable.

It is enough to make one shed tears if one had depth of feeling enough for it to see that even he was forgivable. Here is such a denunciation, as was not heard before from such lips, and yet saying this S. Peter ends: "Repent, and pray the Lord." Still forgivable, still reconcilable, even this worldly man; even he might repent and pray, might perhaps himself become a temple of the Holy Ghost.

We dare not say that anyone can harden himself so as to pass out of the power of the light of God. We are never to think that we have done the unforgivable, that we have alienated the Spirit of God.

Let us go back to the beauty and the joy.

Two daily miracles now

Two daily miracles to be wrought had begun in Samaria.

[1] Rev. xxii. 11. Cf. *The Apocalypse, a Study*, p. 108.

The restoration of nature and the strengthening of the little ones of Christ, not only of children but of all simple souls, of all who were feeling dark, wandering, ignorant. First came the restoration to proper conditions, then the confirming in strength and conduct. These miracles are wrought by the Church every day in two great rites.

to be wrought in the Church, which are:— 1. Set forth in the Rites that have distinct blessing.

Do not form magical ideas of baptism and of confirmation. What is this power? First, all is washed away that interferes with our being our true selves, then the Holy Spirit is still given, is poured from on high. What by nature we cannot have, Love supplies. From the intemperate, the unpeaceful, the gloomy, whatever of these terrible things belongs to them is taken away; and they receive the free gift of *the opposite*—the gift of grace and glory. If we turn back to the rite of Holy Baptism when we come to understand it, and come faithfully to Confirmation with prayer, with true repentance, with lively faith, then to us the gift is given. It is difficult to get people of the right tone and temper to talk about themselves, to say when they understood it, when it dawned on them that they were new born to God, when they recognized the childhood given by God as made new to them. There is a beautiful description of this in an old writer of the 3rd century[1]. He tells how, as an adult, he was prepared for baptism, but how he felt that it was impossible that his luxurious nature should be ever restored to the true nature. 'Such restoration is not for me; I must be baptized, for it is enjoined by God; I will trust Him, but I cannot believe,' and then, 'When I was there the cloud lifted from heaven, the stormy waters became smooth, peace and tranquillity took possession of my whole breast.'

2. Worked out in the daily life of its members.

That is true. Others tell you how, coming to receive the rite bestowed by Peter and John, they received strength. Mothers have often said to the clergy, "If I didn't know what had happened, I could not tell what had come to the children." An old woman of ninety told me once that she had never passed a single day without thanking God for the

[1] Cyprian *ad Donatum* iii. iv. freely quoted; see *Cyprian*, by Archbishop Benson, p. 7, note 1.

Holy Spirit given to her when she came as a girl prepared to receive Him.

Without taking away in the smallest degree from the conviction of this glorious blessing—God forbid that we should do so—we must insist that that is not all; that there may be those who were careless and thoughtless, who do not know that they have received the gift and yet have received it. To them it came only in germ, and expanded afterwards.

And above all this is the glory of what it means: that you, the Church of God as you know you are, have work to do; to restore humanity and to strengthen it.

These two miracles are:—
(*a*) Restoration of Humanity. Its broken not destroyed state.

We must not forget that if we are the body God has framed, if we have been called out of darkness, if we are as lights in the world, if the gift of the Holy Ghost is ours, then it is for *use*. And the teaching about its use is that it was to restore humanity and to strengthen the weak.

Conditions revealed by Sweating System.

Humanity needs it. There is no time to speak of the revelations made of late before the Committee[1]. Can you conceive of those numbers of people, overcrowded, working 18 or 19 hours a day, working on bad tea, weak soup, water; children brought up with no better support than this? It is the utmost toil to them to keep soul and body together, and they live in fear that their masters will take away even that. What room for cultivation of mind or body can there be here? Poor, crooked things, daily withering, bent over the poorest work.

Heathenism.

I need say nothing about heathenism. It is being proved daily that the dregs of Christendom are better than the good wine of heathendom.

Luxurious Life.

If such depression of body brings the soul so low, what is the effect of a luxurious life; of doing nothing but seek for excitement and pleasure, changing scene for scene of it, seeking for mere gratification? What comes of giving the body all it longs for? Far worse, far. And this state of things at both ends is surely committed to the care of people at peace, well-to-do, who know God. *Restoration* must be the first

[1] Sweating Commission, House of Lords, 1888; see *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. II. pp. 207, 280, 308.

thing; those classes, the despair of socialism, which rears its head and says it will care for them, and does nothing but shew misery and offers no cure,—those classes are not the despair of believers. They see the awfulness and mean to work a change—a change to God and light.

These are the despair of Socialism, not of the Church.

Then there is the great Confirmation from the Church for you to work, to strengthen the little ones. That the blessing shall be asked and the spirit given must be the work of those who know God, who know what weakness may be produced in young men and women coming up from the country, strong, pure and determined, who see their substance crumble bit by bit into a shapeless mass.

(*b*) Strengthening of spiritually "little ones." Confirmation in Faith, in conduct; for others' sake. This too a miracle.

You bear with me all so well that I will say again to you that more and more *you* must be the doers. True Churchwomen, in whose hearts is the Holy Ghost, are the people who can and will make the greatest changes. In that striking passage in the Acts (xvii. 4), it is the noble Greek women of the Thessalonians who are mentioned, the *chief* women, the *first* women. Why are they mentioned? It is not the vanity of the Church to shew that they were getting on with the upper classes, but that it was through them that they gained more power, that more could be done now than could have been done otherwise; that here were new resources, new helps, new powers. And in the 12th verse are mentioned the Greek women of honourable estate; this mention shews us clearly of what importance they were thought. The day and place where they first meet certain women is mentioned; how Lydia, the seller of purple, the most costly merchandise in the world, the great merchant woman at Philippi was first affected, how she asked the Apostles to her house. And conjure up as we will the Greek women with their spiritual faces, the Jewesses with the power and glory of their look, Greek taste and Jewish skill, what are they to English women?

1. Special office of Churchwomen such as are in Acts xvii. 4—12, xiii. 50, xvi. 13.

If the Greeks felt the press of luxury, and society and its demands, what of the English? Those who lived in public and almost ruled, or those at home who were powerful there—what were either of these classes to English women?

2. Essentials to (this office), Prayer, Straightness of Heart.

What is it necessary to do? It is put plainly for us in the 21st verse. Straightness of heart is necessary. Simon Magus' fall was because his heart was not straight. And the second essential is Prayer.

3. Knowledge.

And what means are to be used? Not the production of emotion only, but the giving of knowledge which will produce emotion. When they know Christ and the Holy Ghost, emotion will spring up; but emotion will not bring knowledge. Do not try and produce the flower because it is beautiful, without the root.

Lastly, in London there are multitudes of girls waiting to be taught. Classes grow too large; some are dismissed, some handed over; there is no dealing with them because of the lack of great, holy Christian women. Could not some spend the idle Sunday afternoon in teaching such girls and give two or three hours for visiting them in the week?

Forgive my coming from the heights to the depths. But the salvation of the world must be worked out by believers. And you have a wonderful place from which to move the world.

So the Apostles returned. *v.* 25, "They, therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."

XV.

15th June, 1888.

Acts viii. 26—40.

Desert Road 26 proselyte 27 reading aloud 28 Baptismal formula inserted 37 "Rapture" 39 Caesarea 40 xxi. 8.

Conversion and Baptism.

Isai. liii. Prophecy "is not of any Private Interpretation"—(2 Pet. i. 20). 'The Witness of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.' Rev. xix. 10.

The Christ of Prophecy foreseen in the Prophet himself, but imperfectly:—for instance, Is. liii. 5, 6, 12.

v. 32. 'The Lamb of God'—Silence, Passion, Death, Life.

v. 35. "Preached *Jesus* as Good News to him"—*The Lord* is *the Gospel.*

v. 38. Baptism: plainly preached by Philip; so in case of Cornelius, "the Water" x. 47 not dispensed with.

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v. 39. The very guide we want so often removed from our life: The Treasurer's after-life.

The Daily Guidance of Scripture ("The Periocha").

Daily advance; daily demoralisation is by little things—going on doing small things which we think not quite right.

v. 36. "What hinders?"—seize opportunity of charge.

Is God correcting us? in vain?

Acts viii. *vv.* 26—28. "But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of

Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah."

The facts described in these words follow directly after the events told in the 25th verse, after S. Peter and S. John had done their work in Samaria and in the villages. Philip also departing in obedience to the Lord went southwards, "which is desert," for the way is an old abandoned road. Let me notice before I read on, the beauty of this incident as regards merely its outward circumstance. It was the land of Philistia through which Philip went, full of memories of the wars with Israel; the road led to Gaza. Gaza means "the strong" and was an old stronghold of Philistia. Philip would see as he went the beautiful rolling cornlands of Philistia, and beyond that the Mediterranean in its glory, and close by the Castle of Gaza or "the Strong," a fortress near the sea. Then passing along the road would come the Ethiopian lancers and horsemen, the guard of the treasurer of Candace. Candace was not the personal name of the queen, but is the title of the queens of a certain dynasty of Ethiopia. The Treasurer had been to Jerusalem to worship. He came along the silent land in a chariot, such an one perhaps as those we see represented on Egyptian walls; and sitting on the broad rim of the chariot (for "in his chariot" means literally, on the edge of his chariot) he was reading a roll. It was a Greek roll, a part of the Septuagint. And in this scene of loneliness a lonely man darted out (προσδραμών = running out) and came up to the chariot. There were dangers in the desert road, and it was not uncommon for foot passengers who were unprotected to go with the train of some great man who went armed.

Peter and John went their way, Philip his.

The lands, the sea, the loneliness.

The Train—the two men unlike.

This Treasurer was a proselyte, one admitted to be as near a Jew as possible. He was not one of the Gentiles, for Cornelius was the firstfruits of the Gentiles; he was one of those of whom Isaiah (lvi. 4, 5) spoke when he said the blessing of God should reach far beyond the temple:—"For thus saith the Lord of the eunuchs that keep my

sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast by my covenant: unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and daughters." This man was reading the very book in which those words were written. From all these points we get a very complete picture of him.

Philip *heard* him read; we know that still in the East people can scarcely read by eye alone; and three or four hundred years ago in England people found it as difficult, as the Orientals do now, to read to themselves. We see in the plays of Shakespeare that when anyone comes in reading a letter he reads it aloud so that those hear who stand by. The very word here for "read" means to "read aloud."

vv. 29—30. "And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"

There is a play here on words which it is impossible to preserve in translation; the word for "read" is "*ἀναγινώσκειν*," the word for "understandest" (in Philip's question) is "*γινώσκειν*."

v. 31. "And he said, How can I except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him."

Think how the man had in his hand the priceless treasure of the prophecy of Isaiah, which he was murmuring over to himself, and yet felt as he read, "How can I understand? Is it not obscure, does not it want explanation?"

vv. 32—34. "Now the place of the scripture which he was reading was this:—

'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:
In his humiliation his judgement was taken away,
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.'

"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee,

of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?"

This passage comes from the liii. chapter of Isaiah, and is taken from the Septuagint translation—the words "his judgement was *taken away*" and other expressions shew us this, as the other translations render the passage differently. Try to fancy you yourselves are reading this for the first time, not knowing to what it refers.

v. 35. "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus."

"Jesus," that one word answers his question. Philip explained how Jesus had been taken to the slaughter, dumb as a lamb; how judgement had been taken away in His humiliation (that reading is such a grand one); that He was brought so low, so humiliated that He was not really tried, but simply given up, for when He was about to be tried the people burst in with shouts of "Crucify him." Then Philip must have gone on to explain: "And his generation who shall declare?" This is an exceedingly difficult word, even to us. The two best explanations given of it are the following:—(1) "Who shall describe the wickedness of the generation in which He lived?" (2) "Who shall declare who or what He really was?" "For His life is taken from the earth," not as if His life were destroyed but transferred. Thus Philip "preached," or literally "*evangelized*," "gave good news." "He spoke Jesus as good news." Jesus Himself was the Gospel, it was not merely the narrative of His life, not merely the doctrine of who and what He is, or the history of what He did, and does. All these are great truths that we must and are required to hold, but they are not really the Gospel. They are the ascent by which we arrive at Him, but nothing told or said about Him is the Gospel; He is Himself the Gospel. Where we only know Him as a man knows his friend, that is not knowledge of the Gospel, the true knowledge is to know and to have Him.

"Jesus is the Gospel." Would we understood this more.

v. 36. "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

There are two places in this desert, a beautiful spring of water and a beautiful lake, both of which have been supposed to be the place where the eunuch was baptized.

The whole of verse 37[1] of the Authorised Version is omitted in the most perfect texts of the New Testament. St Luke did not write it, some reader of the Gospel placed it naturally in the margin as an account of what probably did really happen; and it was from that incorporated in the text.

vv. 38, 39. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing."

"Rejoicing" to have found out what Isaiah meant, rejoicing to have been placed in the immediate presence of Him of whom Isaiah spake.

v. 40. "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

What is distinctly meant here is that that same thing happened to Philip which the disciples of Elijah said would happen to him[2]; that which Obadiah was afraid would happen to Elijah[3], that which did actually happen to Elijah[4] and to Enoch[5]. This did really happen to Philip; he was caught away and was found again at Azotus, that is old Ashdod of the Philistines.

He came to *Caesarea.* There is an undesigned coincidence worth noticing—a mark of the truthfulness of the Gospel. At the end of the Acts we are told of S. Paul's landing at Caesarea after one of his journeys, and finding there Philip and his four daughters[6]; it was probably Philip's native place.

[1] "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

[2] 2 Kings ii. 3, 5.

[3] 1 Kings xviii. 12.

[4] 2 Kings ii. 11.

[5] Gen. v. 24.

[6] Acts xxi. 8.

There is nothing about that here, but how nicely the two points fit in.

Dwell then on this fine incident; it is the first fulfilment of the prophecy in the Psalms (lxviii. 31) that "The Morians' land shall soon stretch out her hands unto God[1]." This is the first fulfilment; a short time after this there was a Church there, the Ethiopic Church, which, although debased and degraded, exists still. This Church, in the founding of which this same treasurer may possibly have had some share, is one of the most antient in the world.

Then think what it was that this Ethiopian read—how he first knew Christ as *the Lamb of God*, an offering made to God of His own will. This "sheep," this "lamb," the silent one was "bruised for our iniquities." When the Ethiopian read this description, so personal and so touching, the thought crossed his mind as it has done the minds of modern critics, that the prophet was speaking of himself. And probably he was doing so, and if so we have here a fine instance of what S. Peter says is the characteristic of prophecy. He lays down the canon (2 Pet. i. 20) "that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation," that is, there is none which is limited to the special event or to the special person with whom it is primarily concerned. There are many Psalms about Solomon, the king who ruled with a rod of righteousness; and again and again the prophecies of the Old Testament are prophecies referring in the first place to contemporaneous people. There are descriptions of the holy city which in the first place refer to Jerusalem, which was a very holy city compared with cities of other peoples; for it bore more witness to the truth and love of God than other cities, and shewed how God could dwell with men. There are descriptions of the righteous man which in the first place refer to the king. But it was only to a certain extent that these descriptions of the righteous king could apply to the existent kings, in so far as man was helped by God; but they could not shew God in man. The righteousness that was in

[1] Ps. lxviii. 31, R.V. "Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God."

them proved the love of God, but if we examine further something is said about each which the actual king was not able to fulfil. Thus in the Psalm which describes Solomon we find the verse "Prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised[1]." This might be to some extent fulfilled, if odes were made to him and sung, but he could not really fulfil it. Just so here we may be certain that Isaiah in the court of the wicked Manasseh, treated with contumely and martyred, dimly foreshadowing the sufferings of Christ, was speaking partly of himself; but yet of him could not be fulfilled such words as these:—"He was bruised for our iniquities, he was wounded for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." So the old Church of Israel had these words of God given them, and some holy man to serve thus as an illustration of them, but no rabbi could believe that the prophecies had been quite fulfilled in such men, and with all Israel there remained the hope of a Messiah, who should be all that the prophet and king could not be, and should found a city which should not contain such evil as Jerusalem itself. The Angel says in the Revelation that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy[2]; therefore if we understand prophecy we must find Jesus in it.

The Witness of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.

And remember how our Lord Himself, when He joined the disciples at Emmaus, and found them scandalized because "we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel, and this is the third day since he was put to death in the most ignominious way"—remember how He says, "O fools, and slow of heart—ought not Christ to have suffered these things"—was not it written that the true Messiah should suffer and not enter into His glory until He had suffered? And He expounded to them the things concerning Himself.

There are many good books now which in a picturesque rather than an historical way, draw out so well the first meaning of the prophecies, that they are apt to take away

[1] Ps. lxxii. 15, Prayer-book Version. [But R.V. gives "And men shall pray for him continually; they shall bless him all the day long."]

[2] Rev. xix. 10.

from us the sense that the first application is not the whole fulfilment of the prophecy. They are so admirable in describing the first original application that we are drawn away from considering them in the light of their revelation of Christ. We must supply ourselves this greater meaning, we must be able to see, beyond the prophet, Christ, the true, righteous Man, the true sufferer, towering in His glory beyond him who was the first setter forth of these great truths. This prophecy that we have quoted *did* apply to Isaiah; but what is that to us in comparison of the knowledge that its further meaning was in Christ? We shall be interested if we know even the first application of the prophecies, because there is no other book so interesting as the Bible; but with this alone we shall not experience what the disciples experienced when Christ shewed them the things concerning Himself, and they said, "Did not our heart burn within us?[1]" The real "opening of the Scriptures" is to shew Christ in them.

The Ethiopian had Christ and knew Christ, received Jesus as good news, and followed on, no doubt, to the end of the chapter of Isaiah and read that "He poured out His soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors"; but because he had Christ he did not say that he need now fulfil nothing else, need take no heed of Baptism, of the Sacraments or any other rite, need care for no Church. The man was going down to Ethiopia where he would find no other Christians, but he would be a 'complete[2]' Christian. Philip must have talked to him about baptism and he had said, 'Why should you not baptize me and let me go down to my own country baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?' And when the chariot paused he went down with Philip to the water; entering into the true spirit of Christ, who, when John the Baptist, amazed, asked Him, "Comest thou to me?" replied, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Although on the one hand there is a danger of resting on outward things and thinking that they who are partakers of the

[1] Luke xxiv. 32.

[2] As having received Baptism—the Christian τελείωσις.

Sacraments are *therefore* partakers of Christ; yet on the other hand we must try to enter by faith into those things ordained by Christ, like this man, who seeing the water in which he might be baptized, would not "climb up some other way[1]," but entered by the gate into the Church. So he bowed head and shoulders beneath the water, and fulfilled the wonderful simile of S. Paul, "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life[2]." The man as he was plunged beneath the flood knew that he was becoming partaker of the burial of Christ; the passing underneath the flood was at once the symbol of being washed from sin and of dying to sin. As he rose he rose with the determination henceforth to walk in newness of life.

In passing note that the first thing the eunuch heard of God the Word was that He was silent. The Voice of God, the Word of God, was silent before His persecutors; let that be to us in all ages a teaching. Silence has such an effect on our own spirits and on those of others; scarcely anything has so much effect on others as silence under an accusation, being still and patient; having the power of holding one's tongue when one's tongue seems charged.

The first thing he heard of "The Word" was silence. "He shall not cry, nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Is. xlii. 2.

Then as he came from the water the Lord caught away Philip.

His Guide taken away at once.

Is not that like incidents in our own lives, when people are taken from us who seem almost essential to our spiritual life? The first thing sometimes that happens after we have made a resolution to live our life to God, when we are thinking we shall live by the side and with the help of that person who brought us to God, is that he or she is taken away from us. And how often this happens in the New Testament. Do you not feel compassion for the man possessed by a legion of demons who when he was freed besought Christ that he might be with Him, hoped that he might follow Him whithersoever He went, but Jesus suffered him not? He

So often the very person we want for our spiritual life removed.

[1] Jo. x. 1, 2. [2] Ro. vi. 3, 4.

had been made a man, he knew the truth and now he must tell it. "Go to thy house unto thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee[1]." So when this happens to us let us not repine. I hope we are past believing that we can arrange our lives for ourselves better than God can do it for us. He takes our friend away from us because He knows we are strong enough to go alone; from many who have caught the divine fire and ought to give it forth He takes away the friend who has been so useful to them lest they should keep hanging on to him. "Go tell others." You remember the almost astonishing severity with which our Lord sent away a man whom He had healed, as S. Mark tells (i. 43), "strictly charged him" or rather "chafed at him and cast him out"; for our translators here do not even give the fierceness of the original expression. Don't be surprised if Jesus deals with you in a stern and what we should think almost hard way. The divine spark once given, it may be that He does not wish that you should rest, and therefore sends you away to teach others.

This is the last time for a long while (if God is willing we should meet here again) that I shall speak to you. We have now in front of us a complete subject, the way Christ wrought through S. Paul. We should study as the next thing to the life of Christ—God working in man—the life of S. Paul—man working in God. In some ways the life of S. Paul is nearer to us than the life of Christ. As a last thing I want to impress upon you the importance of little daily things. What a treasure we have in the lessons the Church has ordered for daily reading. It may not have been, but very possibly was, the lesson for the day that the eunuch was reading when Philip met him. To read the lessons for the day is the best way to become masters of Scripture; to read the Bible thus with little short commentaries and to impress it on your own hearts brings a daily building up of yourselves. And along with this habit take some of the habits which servants of God have found so useful; for instance, not to read anything else until you have read your

Daily guidance of Scripture. The Lessons.

[1] Mark v. 19.

Bible, not your letters even; to have a corner of your rooms to pray in. To make small rules of this kind, is the way to get over the unrestrainedness which is such a sin with most of us. It is no wonder that such little habits build up character. One of the most learned people I ever knew is one who would not have been called a student, for he never sat down to his books for long together; but he told me that many persons asked him questions (he was at the head of a great library) and he made a point of always answering them to the best of his power, thoroughly investigating each point. Little by little the knowledge thus acquired ranging over the whole field of literature, crystallized, so to speak, until he became the most learned and ready of scholars[1].

Anything great is formed by these little growths, Temper, Learning, Heroism.

If we resolve to make one extract from books we read or to write one sentence in our diary every day we know what a valuable book we get at last. So it is with these habits; nature is full of analogies. To restrain the hasty word again and again is the way to form in time a perfect temper, the way in time to bridle the tongue. So, too, the heroism which everyone attributes in its fullest beauty to the noble man who has passed away from us to-day was built up by little acts[2].

If we do such little things we get a true Christlike character; if not, we grow up to have a very different character. If we think we ought to do a thing which we do not do; if we go on fearing a habit is wrong, doubting whether it is quite right, but going on day by day never putting it away, we are taking the way to degrade, to lower, to bring to the dust any character. There is a wonderful antient word, "He that despises little things shall perish by little things." He who said that had a wonderful penetration into character. And on the other hand one may also affirm that he that doeth holy things, little though they be, shall be built up by little things.

Thinking things right and not doing them. Fearing things are wrong and doing them.

Going on, little by little, despising little things.

One other thing that keeps away from us resolution and

[1] Henry Bradshaw.

[2] The Emperor Frederick.

strength in Christ is the laying hold on doubt for comfort. "I don't know if He did die for my sins." We don't always realise that there is a temptation to be untrue in laying hold of such doubts. We read such and such a book and think it is doubtful whether God Himself did come to die for us. Yet we daren't go through with this doubt. So, too, we doubt about what is given us at the Holy Communion; we doubt as to miracles and for our own purposes we rely on their being doubtful. I am sure there are people who, as a rule, would desire to live with faithful and strong trust in God, but if a temptation comes to them they rely on their doubt, and the doubt grows into certainty. On the other hand if they throw themselves on to God praying, "Let not my foot slip," holding fast on God at slippery moments, this will lead to the formation of a full faith and a Christlike character.

What it comes to—the little dropped and dropped.

Is not God correcting us for these things? Are they not prevalent? Are there not many who are turning out of their lives in small ways all acknowledgement of God? Many who receive from His hand those meals on which our bodily life depends but who never ask that it may be blessed; who continue having family prayers in the house, telling their servants to go, but not being there themselves? The altar in such houses is broken down.

Country Houses—the houses which all the world envied us as English.

Look at our dear country houses of England. Is it not true that people staying there are often encouraged not to go to Church on Sunday, and that those guests who do go, who receive the Holy Communion are thought odd? And do I not know the things said in the evening by those who have received the Holy Communion in the morning? These houses were our pride and the envy of all nations; nothing was more characteristic of them than the religious life in them; they were not ashamed of confessing it. And there are things worse than this—shame and disgrace, here and there, of those houses. Is not what Isaiah spoke of those places where God was not acknowledged happening to them:—"Many houses shall be desolate"?

What has happened to many of these houses? Is God warning us?

But let us hope that God will stir the hearts of those who

have been most markedly His people. We know that He is stirring hearts. Will they hear?

See if Christ does not in this chapter give to each of those who have been baptized into Him a message about two things:—Build up by careful habits a noble character to heal the evils now existing, by restraining wrong little by little; to act on servants and children as they must act who do believe in truth. And pray that this belief may not be in vain.

Think of these things on the last day of that heroic life which was thus built up in its simple domestic affection[1].

[1] See the Letter of the Queen on the death of the Emperor Frederick. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, Vol. II. p. 211.

XVI.—XIX.[1]

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL.

I. This Event is 'Evidence.' Most Miracles are not 'Evidence.' (xvi.)

Miracles (1) are necessary accompaniments of such a Person as S. Paul and others describe, (2) are instances of Kingdom of God at work, (3) as Proofs arrest attention. (xviii.)

II. But this 'Conversion' *is* 'Evidence.' How far its force reaches. (xvii.)

Can a 'Miracle' be wrought on *us*? (xix.)

III. If that ever happened which S. Paul and others say happened to him, then Christ *lives*—not for him only, but for us. Parallel spiritual events happen daily, and the mind does not expect the senses to testify to His Living Presence.

IV. Good sense compels us to consider whether anything in our life would hinder such a fact from taking hold of us. (Lent.)

(1) Some keep the mind suspended and, which ever side they incline to, dwell on the opposite. This is trifling.

[1] The plan drawn out for the next Addresses underwent a certain change. For want of time all was not delivered, neither was the Archbishop able completely to remould his material. The table above therefore gives both the main heads of the Addresses delivered, and the whole of that summary which he had not time to work out.

(2) It is hard for *Ease* not to have an under-wish that Christianity may be shewn to be not *all* true. *Ease* very operative now.

(3) Some wish above all things that they felt Christianity to be all true. If (1) *Ease* is not hindering them, (2) do they live out the little they think they feel? Christianity can be neither Thought without Life nor Life without Thought.

Non-action for Christ is one Testimony given against Christ. Ease is our protest made against Sacrifice. (xix.)

In full tide of all this, Individual Careers still get checked. By *Whom*? for *What*? On the answer, and on whether Ease reasserts itself after all, issues incalculable depend. (xix.)

(4) Some hear the call to "Follow Christ" and follow, and have no more to do but to help others to follow with them.

XVI.

6th March, 1889.

Conversion of S. Paul.

Acts ix.

Preliminary. I. This event is 'Evidence.' S. Paul so uses it often.

Most miracles are not 'Evidence,' but are and always were difficulties.

They are Lessons in what is otherwise undiscoverable.

For example S. Matt. viii. 28 (=S. Mark v. 1, S. Luke viii. 26).

(1) Reveals Spiritual Agents of Evil real, limited, destructive, desperate. Such knowledge does not produce persecution or superstition. Witness the action of Christ, Apostles, Early Church.

(2) Shews phenomena of pain and death to be removable bondage; the cost to be counted.

Suitable Day and Subject for beginning with those who wish for more real life—or at least to inquire whether there is a more real life. Cf. Address No. IV.

We come now in our reading in due order to the account of the Conversion of S. Paul. It is a wonderful chapter for us to read on the first day of Lent. It is the story of a great man, a great scholar, a person of the greatest influence, suddenly changing his life; suddenly becoming convinced that his whole previous life had been a mistake; giving up his whole career in one instant and devoting himself to the hardest, humblest life that was ever led.

The Conversion of S. Paul has caused many of the greatest conversions in the world since, and that not only through the effects of the preaching which he then began; for the history of his conversion itself has come home to individuals, shewing them that it is possible to give up all for Christ, and yet to

grow greater, happier, stronger every hour, so that the more they give up the more they possess—"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

In the beautiful life of Dr Tauler, a preacher at Strasburg, and an early reformer before the Reformation had begun, we read that after days and months in which he had been coming to the conclusion that although he had given himself to God, yet vanity and the love of influence had been the ruling powers of his life, there came to him a great change on the night of the Conversion of S. Paul[1]. And it has come to many since; it comes to us in whatever state of Christian life we are living; it comes to us if we have merely looked over the edge of Christian life, or if, on the other hand, we have been living the Christian life for many years. For every Christian who wishes that Truth, that God, should absorb him more and more, must be always questioning himself, "What is the Conversion of S. Paul to me? Am I riding to Damascus as it were? Have I thoughts I cannot control? Will Christ shew Himself to me, will He take away my errors, my foolish confidence?"

Preliminary. This Event is Evidence.

But before we come to seek after the greatest questions which I am now sketching out so rudely, I ought to say some preliminary things about the event as a whole.

The Conversion of S. Paul is such a great event for Christianity; a miracle, something outside the ordinary course of life, happened to S. Paul. Something which, as we know, changed the whole man; and he never hesitated to tell what this event was.

There is no question but that he looked on it as he would on any other incident; he described the persons with him, the sight and the sound, and he says distinctly that when he was at the height of his belief as to the righteousness of the course he was pursuing—pursuing not simply with ferocity—as of a Roman Catholic prince wishing to stamp out Protestantism, or of a Roman Emperor stamping out Christianity

[1] Cf. *The History and Life of the Reverend John Tauler*, trans. by Susanna Winkworth, London, 1857, ch. IX. p. 45. The History begins when Tauler was preaching in Strasbourg in the year 1340.

as dangerous to the State—but when he believed he was obeying his conscience to the utmost, when he was acting in zeal for God's honour, just then, he says, in a moment, Jesus Christ came and spoke to him. He says that a light which was no earthly light shone round him, a Voice told him what he was to do, and blindness came on him; then a messenger was sent who removed his blindness, and sent him to carry the name of Him whom before he had blasphemed, before emperors and kings. Thus in the fervour of his suppression of Christianity for the service of God all his life was changed. For he was not like a man obeying his selfish and worldly instincts; but he had obeyed God "from his youth," he had already been a pattern of devotion to a sense of duty; and therefore it was that God compassionated him, and took away his ignorance so that he should see things as they were. S. Paul is perfectly clear as to what happened to him.

Now if there is anyone who thinks that S. Paul's life was thus remoulded by a sunstroke, by a sudden paralysis, let it be noticed that such a view must be rejected as implying a miracle infinitely more astounding than that which S. Paul describes—a miracle which would stand quite alone, for there would be nothing else in the whole world like it.

If we accept what S. Paul says this is another incident, not so much in his life, as in the life of Christ. We saw how great a thing it was for the disciples to know that Christ was present with them, though as behind a veil, when He was partly withdrawn from them after the Resurrection, but yet through forty days kept up intercourse with them. So with S. Paul the power of the call was that it was a call from Christ Himself, a call like that of S. Peter, or of S. Matthew when he was sitting at the receipt of custom. In the midst of his career came the voice of Christ to the persecutor. "Who art Thou, Lord?" S. Paul replied; and He said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, but rise and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." This is in truth an incident in the Life of Christ.

The incident is miraculous; and as a miracle it is un-

doubtedly used for evidence, as a proof that Christ lived and spoke as the Gospel narratives record; a proof that Christ was the Saviour of the world, being the Son of God; that He suffered on the Cross, was born of the Virgin, rose the third day from the dead.

Used [as evidence] at once by Barnabas, ix. 27.

The incident is used immediately as evidence by Barnabas. When Saul returned to Jerusalem those who had seen him presiding over Stephen's death, who knew that he had letters from the High Priest to apprehend the Christians at Damascus shrank from him and feared him, thinking his present action was only a piece of policy. But Barnabas, if he had known him in his early life at the university of Tarsus, would know how straightforward, how real a man he was; and we read that at once Barnabas took him to the Apostles and explained the reason of the change[1].

Used by Paul to Jews, xxii.;

S. Paul uses it as evidence too when he explained to the populace why he must make the name of Christ known to the Gentiles. He had received the evidence of Christ about His life and His care for each soul; evidence which there was no disputing, and a command which there was no disobeying

to Agrippa, xxvi.;

Again, before Agrippa he uses it plainly as evidence; when his story is told, one judge exclaims that he is beside himself, for there is no doubt of the reality of his conviction at least. The man stood there making everything in heaven and earth turn on the fact that Christ had been present; there was no doubt that he was honest, therefore he must be insane, so Festus argues. And we see that his judges understood that he was using the incident as evidence, for Agrippa said, "You are making short work of *persuading me to be a Christian*[2]."

[uses it] Gal. i. 11—18.

And once more S. Paul uses it in the Epistle to the Galatians; and note that whatever doubt critics may have raised as to the authenticity of other books of the New Testament it has not been seriously doubted that the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Romans, and those to the Corinthians, were written by S. Paul[3].

[1] Here and elsewhere cf. Editor's Preface and pp. 192 (note 2), 216.

[2] Cf. R.V. xxvi. 28, and see p. 616.

[3] Cf. pp. 192 f.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, after he had told how he had profited and advanced in knowledge of the Jewish theology, he says that, when it pleased God "to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." And he makes it clear that he had not learnt the facts of Christ's life from men but from Christ Himself[1].

Now let me ask you to keep in mind for a short time that S. Paul does put the fact of his conversion as a distinct piece of evidence to the truth of Christianity, and others do so also. If Christ was alive and spoke to S. Paul, if Christ taught him, nothing in the Christian religion can be difficult to anyone.

Most Miracles not Evidence, but are and also were difficulties

I must pause here to point out in reference to some things which have been lately said and written, that most miracles are not evidence; they are not brought forward as proofs, or rather they are not brought forward to prove what has been commonly supposed.

In nine cases out of ten, if one asked what was to be deduced from miracles, the answer would be that they were intended to prove that Christ was the Son of God. Yet this was never alleged; and I think if we look candidly into the question it will shew us that miracles always were difficulties. It has been said by some that they are hard to believe, and the true answer is that they always were difficulties; not that they were intended to be difficulties, but that they naturally take their place as such, and are not, like S. Paul's conversion, brought forward as proofs.

and are really Lessons out of the Unseen.

Miracles are glimpses, revelations of what the world would be if it were not for the hindering forces in it.

Were Christ and God our Lord and King, and the race of man wholly surrendered to Him, there would be nothing that defiled, no suffering, no pain, no crippled form of the woman "bound by Satan" for eighteen years, no man sighing out of the depths of his heart, "Lord, that I might receive my sight"; no father saying, "My child is at the point of death"; no seven demons to cast out of Mary Magdalene.

[1] See *The Apocalypse, a Study*, Essay IV. § 4, p. 116.

If the Kingdom of God were here in righteousness and truth, then the yoke, the burden, the crushingness of sin could not find expression in the bondage of spirit in nature. In miracle after miracle that Christ works, He seems to lift the veil so that the Kingdom of God is seen for a moment. Thus in one case, He says, when the Pharisees murmured at Him, 'You are careful of cattle on the Sabbath day; and ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, to be loosed from her bonds on the Sabbath day?' (Luke xiii. 10—18). This miracle therefore was not meant to prove to the Pharisees that He was God or the Son of God, but to let in on their dark minds the thought that the Kingdom of God was strength, and health, and glory, and to shew that the Sabbath is not meant to be a hindrance to what is good and healthful and glorious. To make this diseased woman straight was a manifestation of the Kingdom of God; and the miracle was not intended to prove that the Man who could do this must have God with Him; it was an instruction in the nature of the Sabbath, and in the beauty and power of the Kingdom. So every miracle of enlightening and strengthening is an exemplification of the destruction of the power of sin. Thus miracles, so far from being intended to create a belief in Christ, were often not worked until faith was present. For instance, the paralytic was not healed in order that those who did not believe might know that Christ was the Son of God; for it was when Christ *saw the faith* of those that brought him that He said, "Arise" (Luke v. 17—26).

Specimens of what the Kingdom of God is.

Miracles of healing. Evidence of belief asked first. So we are very likely not to believe the Miracle unless we believe Him.

Christ Himself told the father of the lunatic child that the boy was not healed *because of unbelief*; but when the father cried out "Lord, *I believe*, help thou mine unbelief"—when belief was wrought in the soul—then Christ could heal him (Mark ix. 17—28).

When the centurion begged Him not to go down to heal his servant, when he came and said to Him, "You are, I know it, Lord, in such a position as I am in my own regiment, so that I can say to a soldier 'Go,' and he goes; do thou therefore speak the word." Then Jesus said, "I have not seen *so great faith*, no, not in Israel." And the servant was healed

(Luke vii. 2—10). To the woman who had touched Him He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke viii. 48). So miracles as they stand ordinarily are rewards of faith—not evidence.

The Miracle of Matt. viii. 28 etc. (1) reveals spiritual agents of Evil.

Now let us take that strange, fantastic, animal tragedy, related in three of the Gospels.

A man (or, according to S. Matthew's account, two men) came out of the tombs; so fearfully lunatic that no one could deal with him; he could not be bound by any method, nor kept indoors[1], but day and night was in the tombs crying and cutting himself with stones. We know the rest, the strange question, not to the man but to the powers possessing him; and their answer that they were "Legion"; we know how these powers trembled, 'Thou Son of the Most High God, art thou come to torment us before the time?' And then the strange prayer, "If thou cast us out, suffer us to enter into the herd of swine." Then we read how the whole herd of swine dashed down into the sea. Now, was this evidence? Was the miracle a difficulty or not? Did it promote Christianity? Did it establish Christ's Kingdom? Was it wrought that it might do so?

It had two effects. At the moment, "They came and besought him to depart out of their coasts." A difficulty, indeed. They closed their hearts against the miracle that they saw. Then a little later came the objection raised by more learned adversaries (Matt. ix. 34, Luke xi. 15), "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils." The miracle was no evidence, but a terrible difficulty.

But what was it meant to do in reality? It was an opening of the door of knowledge, it made a very strange kind of knowledge plain to us, bridging the gulf between man and the powers of evil; it was a plain assurance that these powers are our enemies, and though not in human shape, are capable of occupying human minds that are surrendered to them; it revealed evil spirits for the moment powerful, but afraid, destructive, desperate.

[1] The details here summed together are collected from the three accounts. That in S. Matthew is the most abbreviated.

Knowledge of Demons does not create superstition, persecution. This was the barbarous world overrunning the Church.

It has been said that belief in such spiritual beings created superstition and led to persecutions. But the tendency to superstition and persecution did not originate in these beliefs, though it may have given them form. Superstition rages and is most dominant among those who have no Christian belief. And it was not belief in evil spirits which caused the persecutions of the middle ages. There is evidence to shew that the barbarous tendencies of the tribes that possessed Europe entered into the Christian Church. The worship of saints, of relics, of images, the obscuring of the idea of communion in the Eucharist and the setting up instead of a new idea of sacrifice[1] were the effects of the old superstitions of the past, born among the dark forests from which the conquering tribes came. These ideas were unvanquished by the teaching of Christianity, and found themselves alongside of it and prevailed.

What was Christian is shewn in Christ and the Apostles. Exorcism of the Early Church.

If the belief in demons created persecution there ought to have been signs of this tendency in the lives of Christ and His Apostles. But is Christ more tender to any than to those possessed? Remember how the man, clothed and in his right mind besought that he might be with Him. But though he was healed he was not fit to be an Apostle, and he was told in tender words to go home.

In the same way the Apostles dealt with the Pythoness. They themselves had to go to prison, and came near dying, because they delivered this poor soul. And later, in the first centuries of the Christian Era, there was a regular body of

[1] "The Holy Eucharist, the crown of living Worship, sets forth this truth [that Worship and Life are inseparable] beyond all its truths. Except 'ye eat my flesh ye have no life in you' says Christ: but all His teaching says also, 'except ye have life in you ye cannot eat my flesh.' When the assembling of ourselves together is frequented with usage due of psalms, of hymns, of spiritual odes, of supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings, breaking of the bread, blessing of the cup, constant predication of the Lord's death, constant anticipation of His return, this is the Introit of the living sacrifice; the pure incense, without which it can scarcely be accepted. And the rational Worship is the sacrifice itself—that rational Worship 'which is not only the homage of the reason to God,' as a Greek writer says, 'but is also the life of a citizen of Christ.'—*Work, Friendship, Worship. Three Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge*, by E. W. Benson, D.D., pp. 85, 86, Cambridge, Deighton, Bell and Co., 1872.

Exorcists, with a form of service, consecrated to delivering the poor sufferers. There is early testimony, which is scarcely gainsaid, which shews how evil spirits came forth shrieking and left the possessed sane.

This is not the time nor the place to argue as to whether these actual incidents are true, but we can argue from them that there was no tendency for such belief in evil spirits to produce persecution. On the contrary a part of the Christian ministry was set aside to bring the Name of Christ to bear, not for persecution but for healing.

(2) Shews that pain and death are removable from man.

But this miracle does not only teach us a terrible piece of knowledge to which Christ set His seal, concerning the dark powers against whom He was fighting, but there was another teaching also: that pain and death were removable from man, that the power of evil had no more dominion over man. In the eighth chapter of the Romans[1] we read that when the full deliverance of man is brought about, "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." First man must be free, then all creation.

There is one word I must say, do not let it seem too hard. If Christianity is of God, then there must be in Christianity a recognition of the phenomena in the world itself. If the world and the teaching of Christ proceed from the same Author, then we must find that what Christ teaches, the world also teaches; and I put this point to you: with all of us there is a tendency to think that God is simply benevolence, almost I might say, good nature. Now is this the teaching of the world? Do we see death and pain made of great account in nature. I remember reading in some scientific book that pain and suffering seem to be of no account in the world; and it would seem from this that the God of this world was a God who did not take pain into account. And—in all tenderness—the lesson from the creation would seem to be that the common estimate of pain was too high. So thought S. Paul, who recked nothing of pain for himself; all the pain to him was not worth estimating, "not worthy to be compared

Meanwhile this world shews pain not of great account until λύπη καὶ στεναγμός disappear.

[1] Ro. viii. 21.

(3) The fantastic animal tragedy. Argument *ad hominem* —a disbelieving hunter. Argument *ad hominem* —a disbelieving surgeon.

to the glory that is to be revealed." And I think we learn so from this miracle, with its great sacrifice of animal life. It would only be an argument *ad hominem* to say "Is it so great a sacrifice when we think of the enormous slaughter of creatures which is continually going on?" Can a great hunter who goes to slaughter thousands of innocent creatures think it so, or a scientific man who thinks nothing of many creatures tortured to prove one scientific fact?

(4) Cost to be counted.

That Christ took account of the sacrifice we doubt not—He who said "One sparrow shall not fall without your Father"; but the sacrifice must be measured with the end. Was this moreover so great a sacrifice to one who was ready to give up His whole self to a torturing death for us? And one human being rescued from a state most abject and most miserable, is worth all the world beside. He who taught, "What shall it profit a man to win the whole world and lose his own soul?" knew that this saved soul was worth what He counted a greater sacrifice. If the miracle had only revealed to us by such a sacrifice the legion of spiritual enemies who lie in wait for one soul, yet who must obey Christ's lightest word, who become desperate in animosity when they see Christ advancing to take possession,—was the sacrifice comparatively costly as some would have us think?

XVII.

6th March, 1889.

The Conversion of S. Paul.

Acts ix.

II. But this 'Conversion' *is* 'Evidence.' How far its force reaches.

The Conviction and the Honesty of the Witness.

The Date A.D. 36—38.

Consistency of his letters with another's narrative (*Horæ Paulinæ*).

The undoubted letters (distinct from and some earlier than Gospels) rest on Christ's Birth, Descent, Circumcision, Messiahship, Apostolate, the Communion, His Death on the Cross, Burial, Resurrection on the Third Day, Ascension, Atonement, Baptismal Birth, Union with Him, Intercourse.

No criticism removes these from the text of unquestioned letters of S. Paul.

Exaggerated ideas of what Criticism does, e.g. S. John viii., S. Mark xvi.

Recapitulation.

We will first run over what we said last time about the Conversion of S. Paul. Most miracles are not evidence, but this miracle is evidence, and is at once and repeatedly used as evidence by S. Paul. Most miracles are, and always were difficulties; and if we ask why they are not evidence, we shall find that true faith needed no miracle to shew that Jesus was the Son of God. Belief in the evidence of His daily life, His conversation, His words, His teaching, this in itself led to

faith in Him. Signs are secondary to belief in the Person of Christ, and Jesus Himself seems to say, 'If you cannot feel and realize who I am by all you see and hear, then believe me for "the very works' sake"; if my words are not enough, then believe by sight' (Jo. xiv. 11).

Again, we said, Spiritual Agents of Evil are real, limited, destructive, and desperate; but Evil cannot turn out Evil, only Good can destroy the power of Evil. By miracles Jesus shewed the Kingdom of God, revealed what was going on behind the veil; He opened the door as it were and let the Kingdom of God be seen for a moment. Such miracles were specimens of what the Kingdom of God would be here on earth if we were not bound down by sin. Jesus released the poor woman who had been bowed down eighteen years; He released or delivered her, and enabled her to walk upright like those around her. This was to signify that Jesus can loose, release, deliver all who are tied and bound down by sin, and can restore the soul of man. The sin and evil of the world cause pain and suffering: when the unclean spirit was cast out of the man into the swine, and that animal tragedy took place, what was the change wrought in the man? His one wish henceforth was to live with and follow Jesus. The presence of these evil spirits proved that *there were* actual enemies not in human shape yet taking possession of the mind, capable of being driven out by the presence and power of God, and these miracles shewed plainly, by opening the door of knowledge, the reality of these evil spirits. Belief in such beings may have encouraged superstition, but yet superstition is far more widespread amongst barbarous tribes who have never had Christian teaching. The heathen and hill tribes in India, in Africa, have sacrifices, worship idols, images, animals, even now; the tribes, who centuries ago descended on civilized Europe, took possession of churches, set up images, worshipped relics; and their barbaric idea, their way of exterminating evil was by force. But how did Christ and His Apostles cast out the Power of Evil? Not by persecution, but by tenderness and compassion. It is not possible to do as some tried to do in times gone by, and order a whole

tribe, a whole nation to set aside heathenism and believe in Christianity under the penalty of death, giving no teaching, no knowledge of Christ. This method does not make Christians.

In Norway when a preacher (present at a banquet where Odin's health and other gods' was to be drunk), said:—"Now instead of Odin and the gods drink to Christ and His Apostles," that did no good, for such translation of barbaric ideas into Christian language cannot establish Christianity; this will not drive out evil, it must be done by teaching, by tenderness, endeavouring individually to deliver those possessed, and to bring the name of Christ to bear by healing and restoration.

We also saw that pain and death were removable by man; Christ destroyed their dominion. He concentrated in Himself the tenderest feelings found in man and in woman. Pain was not counted of great importance by Christ Himself, nor by S. Paul; it was removable bondage; but the *soul* must be rescued even at so great a cost as death, and shame, and cruel torture; and if pain and death could rescue other human beings, it was worth all the world beside; "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

II. Conviction and Honesty undoubted. Even [by] Festus [who must call him] 'mad'—of which we can judge as well as Festus.

We return to the account given by S. Paul of his Conversion, when he stood before Festus and Agrippa. He was so unlike other men, so eager, so zealous, that Festus exclaims, "Paul thou art mad; much learning doth turn thee to madness" (Acts xxvi. 24). Yes! for to S. Paul all was dross but Christ. It is often asserted that S. Paul represented at this time the unpopular side of Christian teaching, and that the other Apostles were opposed to him. This is not true, they were all friends, they taught the same thing.

Not a jot of evidence that Apostles doubted him or that S. James opposed him; afterwards heretical sects did; but no Apostolic man.

Again, it is said that S. Paul, as opposed to the other Apostles, did away with the old law; but we find that S. James at Jerusalem, as Head of the Council, decided that the outward signs of Judaism were not binding on Gentile converts, and the Council sent letters to this effect to the Churches of the

Gentiles by the hands of Paul and Barnabas[1]. There was no opposition here between S. Paul and the rest of the Apostles; all worked together.

It is sometimes said that the earliest of the Gospels was not written until about the year A.D. 88, that is to say about 60 years after the death of Christ; and that a narrative written so long after the events cannot be called evidence, for the date is too late for anyone to remember the details of the acts and words of Christ.

Unaffected similarity of citation; perfect uniformity both in East and West; practice of heretics. There must have been a written narrative either coincident with or before the written Word[2].

But, supposing that this were so, how about the Epistles? If we only wanted to know about Christ's life the Epistles are sufficient. S. Paul was converted about 36 or 37 A.D., then after three years (Galatians i. 18) he began to teach and to write to his converts, this would be about the year 40—seven years after Christ's Ascension. S. Paul tells us he was taught by Christ Himself (Gal. i. 11, 12); then what was it that *he* taught to all the people? He taught all alike, and he wrote just as he taught, one and the same thing; and to the question, "What did he teach?" we find the answer in his Epistles. Some of the Epistles attributed to S. Paul have been said not to be his writing, but serious critics have never doubted that the Epistle to the Romans, the 1st and 2nd Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the

S. Paul's conversion in A.D. 36—38.

S. Paul's Teaching in A.D. 40; Epistles begin A.D. 53 to the Churches he had founded and to whom he had evidently taught the same thing.

32 A.D. (*see Editor's Preface*, p. vi.).

35 A.D.

[1] Cf. Acts xv. 4, 13, 19—29. Addresses xxxi. p. 334; xxxii. p. 347.

[2] That part of the Address to which these notes relate has been omitted, as well as some other portions concerning questions of biblical criticism. It will be remembered that about this time such questions were being popularly treated and popularly discussed. The Archbishop dealt with them in three ways: Firstly by a necessarily brief sketch of the particular difficulty and its solution. Such a treatment can have but a temporary value in relation to temporary difficulties; and such parts of the Addresses have not been printed.

Secondly, by continual insistence on points of individual coincidence, and vivid personal touches; these must always have evidential value, and research adds to their number.

Thirdly, by the weaving of such points into a complete picture or reconstruction of an incident or a personality. This, though involving points of probability as well as of knowledge, must always be suggestive, and is moreover part of the larger archaeological treatment into which analytic criticism is expanding (cf. Preface to *Authority and Archaeology*, Ed. D. G. Hogarth).

Galatians were written by S. Paul; no serious doubt has ever been thrown on these four Epistles. So putting the Gospels and all the other Epistles on one side, I think I can prove to you all before we part that those four Epistles contain all the leading points in the life of Christ, and agree with the Gospel teaching; and remember, they were written at least 30 years before the alleged date of the Gospel narratives.

What did he teach about Christ's Person?

If you turn to 2 Cor. viii. 9 you read, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." Now this passage shews that S. Paul had taught the Corinthians of a time when Christ was 'rich,' this must mean that he had told them of Jesus' previous existence with His Father in great glory, and that He left this for their sakes, and instead became poor.

His previous existence.

Turn to Galatians iv. 4. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law";—here we have the account of the Virgin-born Son of God, the correct translation is "born of woman" (not of a woman), and the 2nd half of the verse "born under the law" alludes to the descent from David, which is given explicitly in Romans i. 3, 4, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh.....declared to be the Son of God." Therefore S. Paul taught that this Jesus was Son of God, born of woman and a descendant of David. In 1 Cor. x. 16, we have the institution of the Holy Eucharist. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?" In 1 Cor. xi. 23 S. Paul says, "I *received of the Lord* that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread..." Therefore about 30 years before the Gospels were written S. Paul, taught by the Lord Himself, teaches the people the Institution of the Lord's Supper and mentions that it was instituted the same night in which the Lord was *betrayed.* Does not all this correspond exactly with the teaching of the Gospels? In Galatians v. 11 S. Paul writing about circumcision speaks of the stumbling-

Birth.

Descent.

Communion.

Death on the Cross. block of the Cross; in Gal. iii. 12—14 he proves that Christ's teaching was circumcision of the spirit, not of the outward man. And again, S. Paul glories only (Gal. vi. 14) "in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This allusion to Christ's death on the Cross shews that converts were familiar with the story of the *Burial.* Cross. In 1 Cor. xv. *vv.* 3—8 he says, "I delivered unto you... that *which I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that *Resurrection on the third day.* He rose again the third day according to the scriptures"; then he mentions Cephas, and the twelve, and the 500 brethren who saw Christ after He was risen, then an appearance to James, then to all the Apostles, "and last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Here we see S. Paul taught that Christ *died for our sins*, that He was *buried*, that He *rose* on the *third day*, and in *vv.* 13—15 he adds, "but if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God....."; thus he taught the Resurrection of Christ, which, he says, was what he had always preached, and the faith which they had believed. Is not this a strong point, of proof,—the enumeration of those who had seen Christ risen? Nothing could be clearer than this declaration that if they did not believe this, then all was in vain. What a firm faith in the Resurrection this shews—and it also proves S. Paul taught the "Forgiveness of sins," in that he says Christ "died for our sins." Again, in the 20th verse, we read, "now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." Here we have the assurance that all shall be raised even as He was. In Romans x. 6—10 we find S. Paul teaching the Romans the same thing as he taught the Corinthians,—"Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead." Here again we have *Ascension.* the witness of S. Paul's teaching to the Ascension of Christ. In *vv.* 8, 9 he speaks of "the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Look at Rom. viii. 32, where S. Paul speaks of God's love in not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up for us all, saying "how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" In the 34th verse he says, "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the Right Hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us." Here, we see, S. Paul taught that Christ was on the right hand of God, and even now occupied in pleading and interceding for His people. In Rom. v. 6, 8 we read "in due time Christ died for the ungodly," "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," and in ib. 11, "we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." S. Paul shews why Christ died and what that death gained for us: (Rom. iii. *vv.* 25, 26) "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to shew His righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God";... "that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus," teaching faith in the Blood of Christ for the remission of sins. In Rom. vi. 4 we find the doctrine of Baptism as taught by S. Paul; "buried therefore with Him through baptism into death"; and again in his Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 27), "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ did put on Christ." He also taught our unity, that we are one body in Christ who is our Head, 1 Cor. xii. 13, "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (20), "many members, but one body" (27), "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Atonement.

Baptism [new] *Birth.*

Union with Him.

Lastly, I would remind you that as we have now traced the life of Christ in those four Epistles, and find it corresponds with the Gospels, so we must remember what S. Paul says in Gal. i. 11—18, where he certifies that the Gospel preached of him was not taught him by man, but he received it by revelation of Jesus Christ. His teaching was real and true, it was from Christ, and it shews that Christ was indeed real to him, and present with him.

Intercourse.

We have seen sufficient to prove that there is an ex-

The Gospel Memoirs are not more explicit as to the main facts. No criticism removes these.

aggerated idea of the harm adverse criticism might do. Any argument is worthless against such proofs, when we see how the testimony of the Gospels is strengthened, as point by point is traced and proved in the Epistles. No greater pains have ever been taken with any history, no details been more made out, nor more evidence found anywhere, than we find in these four Epistles, and in their entire correspondence with the history of the Gospels, setting clearly before us the Life of Christ the Son of God.

XVIII.

20th March, 1889.

The Conversion of S. Paul.

Acts ix. 1—19.

Miracles (1) are necessary accompaniments of such a Person as S. Paul (and others) describe. *He* the Miracle.

(2) Are *instances* of Kingdom of God at work. If they have spiritual meaning, all Nature has.

(3) As "Proofs," arrest attention. But *cannot* by themselves "*prove*" the Worker to be Divine.

As illustrations of His character, they are addressed to Believers: were declared to have next to no relation to unbelief.

S. John's Blind Man. Lazarus. The Five Thousand. The Climax for John Baptist.

Acts ix. 1. "But Saul, yet breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest." The Scriptures spare no man, nor do they spare here the accurate account of Saul's feeling.

v. 2. "And asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way [any, that is, walking in that Way] whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

vv. 3, 4. "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" It appears that while Saul heard a voice, those with him only heard a noise[1] and saw the bright light.

[1] Cf. *v.* 7 margin, 'sound.'

v. 5. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:" the same Jesus who had lived amongst them, died, risen, and whom they had seen ascend. This same Jesus still alive, still remembering His own, pleading for and with His own, though out of sight, was still present, still working, speaking and caring for His own.

vv. 6—8. "But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice [or sound], but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus." He enters Damascus perfectly humiliated. What a contrast to the entry he expected!

v. 9. "And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink."

So he remained for three days sightless, unable to eat; then Ananias, a disciple, is sent to lay his hands on Saul, and God speaks of Saul as a "chosen vessel," or "vessel of election" (margin) "to bear His Name," which is the revelation of Himself, to Gentiles and kings.

vv. 10—16. "Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Then Ananias restores Saul's sight.

vv. 17, 18. "And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight."

This bodily sight restored is a symbol of the inner sight; the scales that fell from his eyes are as the darkness removed from the eyes of his mind so that they are able to receive the light,—which Ananias said should come with restored sight.

vv. 18, 19. "And he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened."

We must return to the question on the paper[1].

Miracles have three aspects—

I. They are the *necessary* accompaniments of a Person such as Christ appears to us, as described by S. Paul and others. It would have been wonderful had there been no miracles, they are the necessary consequence and outcome of such a life as Christ's; HE is *the Miracle*, He, the Son of God, who lived, suffered, died, rose, lived again amongst His own, still lives, intercedes, loves now as then. It is simply childish to think of Miracles as the main difficulty; they are as nothing compared to *the* Miracle of Himself. It was not because of these miracles, the natural consequence of His Life, but because of His Life itself that S. Paul was hastening to Damascus, and was putting into prison and to death those who spoke of Christ and His Miracles. See what the change in him was; after his Conversion he himself immediately began to teach and speak of miracles. They are natural consequences.

This is a difficulty which presents itself to many. Others find their chief difficulty in another point, and ask, "How can you prove that Christ said what is attributed to Him?" This shall be our subject next time.

II. Miracles may be viewed in another aspect; they are

[1] Cf. Address No. XVI. p. 179, and No. XVII. recapitulation, p. 189.

Miracles were instances of the Kingdom of God at work; symbols, but only as Nature itself is a symbol. If they were signs of an inner spiritual realm, then Nature itself must have an inner spiritual basis.

Similarly if Nature is symbolic, as all poets, all thinkers say, then miracles are symbols of living power.

instances of the Kingdom of God at work in us; they are symbols with a spiritual meaning, just as Nature itself is a symbol. If the restoration to health of a person, dangerously ill, is symbolic, then health and unhealth themselves must be symbols. Health is a sign of God's goodness and is to His glory; unhealth is a sign that some evil is working against Nature. Even Nature itself will one day be removed when good and evil are revealed and Christ removes all blemishes and all stains. Did He not with the mere touch of His Hand remove blindness, leprosy, deafness, dumbness; make the crooked straight and raise the dead, all by His touch. So some day all symbols will be removed, both the healing and the misery; and then the instances of the Kingdom of God at work will stand out revealed and clear in spiritual meaning.

As proofs they arrest attention; but they instantly challenge objection as proofs of divine, not merely occult powers.

It must instantly be asked, "Are they divine in their aim? Is there anything divine in the purpose, conduct, character of the workers?"

III. The third aspect of Miracles is Proof. As we said, all miracles are not proofs; the conversion of S. Paul was evidential because Saul, leading his active life as a persecutor, suddenly reverses his whole manner of action, thought and life, working with those whom he had previously counted his enemies. The wonderworkers and sorcerers could not prove by their works more than that they had occult powers, that they were masters of some secret of nature; their works could never prove that they had divine power. The proofs of divine power are holiness, truthfulness, sanctity of life: the man who can exhibit such signs is He who can say "I am the Son of God[1]."

Without these signs who should believe that the power is divine? If I saw a man working miracles and did not know his manner of life and his character I should not believe that the power by which he worked even miracles and wonders was divine. But here is a man who says that He is the Son of God; and His life is one of absolute purity, perfect sanctity; He is a man of holiness and innocency of character under all temptation; a man shewing a divine purpose in all His conduct; I could believe that the miracles of such a man

[1] Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; Mk. xiv. 61, 62; Lu. xxii. 69, 70; Jo. xvii. 1, xix. 7.

were manifestations of divine power, and I should understand all power as belonging to such a life. But if we consider the ordinary ghost story, or the wonderful things done by second sight, we shall see that it is impossible to conclude that those who do these things are divine; they may be remarkable, but they are not therefore of God.

Ghost stories, second sight, psychicalia never made anyone say, "This is the finger of God."

Christ is first called a "Prophet," but the confession soon passes beyond that, "Truly this Man was the Son of God."

But Christ's [works] did to the best minds and to the mass of men.

He proved this by His *daily* life; His whole character benevolent, gentle, shewing love to all, by His readiness to give up His days and His nights to comfort, heal, teach, and feed those who had no shepherd; He had insight into the case of those that came under His notice, He knew if they had Faith, He was drawn to and embraced all that was holy and virtuous in any that came near Him. But He required, with one or two exceptions, a measure of Faith in those He healed before He performed the miracle. "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace" (Lu. vii. 50); "Go thy way; *as* thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee" (Matt. viii. 13); "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole; and immediately he received his sight." (Mk. x. 52.) A moral, religious feeling was required before a miracle could be effected. When Christ was asked to give signs from heaven to shew His power[1], so that all who saw the miracle might believe on Him and numbers who doubted be added to His followers, *He refused.* But someone might say there was an exception to this—the case of the man sick of the palsy—Jesus said to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2). When the scribes doubted and said He blasphemed, He healed him (*v.* 6) "that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority[2] on earth to forgive sins..." He it was who proved the miracle, not the miracle that proved His power. The sight of suffering and disease appealed to His soul, and He grieved to see such evidence of sin, and misery, as met His eyes on every side. Think how He sighed when He looked up to heaven, put His finger in the deaf man's ears, and

But what they proved absolutely was of what character He was who did them—Benevolence, Insight, Faith, Holiness.

They proved nothing except to Believers, not that He was Holy, still less that He was ΥΙΟC ΘΕΟΥ.

He refused signs as proof.

[1] Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1; Mk. viii. 11; Lu. xi. 16; Jo. ii. 18.

[2] Cf. marginal reading.

touched his tongue, saying, "Ephphatha, Be opened" (Mk. vii. 34). We read when He heard Lazarus was dead, "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" (Jo. xi. 33). He wept as He went to the grave and groaned again (*v.* 38);—the sorrow, pain and suffering caused by sin, caused Him pain, yet He said miracles would be useless even as teaching had been, except to believers. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." (Lu. xvi. 31.) How little adherence was gained by miracles, how few believed! Look at the account in S. John ix. 4 ... : here a man blind from his birth receives his sight, but this great miracle produced no general conviction. It shewed Christ's Love and compassion, but the neighbours only wondered. The council of Pharisees had the man brought before them, witnesses were called, all say 'he is the man who was blind': his parents confirm this—he is their son, and was born blind; trouble was taken to examine the whole case, but the result was that they excommunicated the man on whom the miracle had been wrought, they "cast him out" (*v.* 34). A moral condition must come first.

He said signs were useless as proof.

S. John's Blind Man—thoroughly examined and excommunicated.

Look once more at the raising of Lazarus; his friends and neighbours followed Jesus to the grave, and saw the dead raised, but only His disciples *believed* on Him, and understood His power, because they knew His character, His life, His nature; just before they had seen Jesus willing to face danger by returning to Judaea where the Jews had sought to stone Him, and they had followed Him, "Let us also go that we may die with him" (Jo. xi. 8—16). Therefore, this miracle strengthened, or as it were, raised them up and encouraged them. This was the result on believers, but what was the effect on the multitude? A few believed, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council and resolved on the death of Jesus. Even raising the dead produced no conviction. Consider the miracle of the loaves and fishes distributed amongst the five thousand (Matt. xiv. 15—21; Jo. vi.); all were fed, there was abundance and to spare. Was this enough to prove *He was the Son of God?* If we

Lazarus' raising—His *disciples* believed, Pharisees resolved His death.

Great feeding of Five Thousand used by Himself to break up His following.

study John vi. we shall see the result, the after consequence of the miracle, and the lesson it was meant to teach. The multitude when they saw the miracle wanted to make Him a King by force, but Jesus withdrew into the mountain alone; next day they again sought a repetition of the miracle, and flocked to Jesus. He knew what they came for. He says (*vv.* 26, 27), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me... because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth." He seems to say that He is not a bread-giving King, for all to run after that they may be provided for. His first miracle was not to attract the multitude, but for believers, and to warn off those who merely needed to be fed and were not in earnest. It was done to shew which were His own, and which were following for gain, therefore He refuses (*v.* 30) to shew a second sign, and goes on to point out what the first miracle was intended to teach, making all turn upon those words (*v.* 35), "I am the Bread of Life." He points out the true meaning of this, that those who believed in Him must feed on Him. The Jews murmured at this saying (*v.* 41), but Jesus points out that He only draws to Himself those whom His Father sends to Him, and repeats, "I am the Living Bread which came down out of heaven." What is the final result? The Jews strove one with another, and (*v.* 60) "many therefore of His disciples when they heard this said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?...And Jesus answered, Doth this offend you?...But" (He adds) "there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not"; and (*v.* 66), "Upon this many of His disciples *went back, and walked no more with Him.*" Thus we see how the miracle sifted off those who sought a Bread-giving King, distinguishing those who really believed in the answer given by Peter to Jesus' appeal, "Will ye also go away?" "We have believed, and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Here the common view of miracles is inverted; and if we put our view straight the common objection to miracles disappears. Miracles alone will never prove Him to be the Son of God, but His being the Son of God renders miracles intelligible and inevitable.

John the Baptist when in prison wished to have a true view of Christ's Mission, and was anxious to know if *this* was *the Christ*, so he sent disciples to Jesus to know, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?[1]" Perhaps John expected more would be done by Christ; he thought all seemed quiet, and therefore sent to know if Christ was only a messenger, or was He going to take the nation in hand, and assert His authority? What answer did Jesus give? He simply bids John's messengers to judge for themselves, to look on and see what He did, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead; and lastly, as the climax, more wonderful still than raising the dead, He says, "the poor have the Gospel preached to them," good tidings are spread far and wide amongst the poor, not amongst the rich and higher classes, but amongst the poor. This was the message Jesus sent to John the Baptist, adding "and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me[2]."

The true view of miracles appears exactly in the answer to John the Baptist's disciples.

This knowledge of Christ, the effect of His life, must be borne in on our lives, and shew its effect in us. It was this Truth that was borne in on S. Paul and he preached this knowledge, this truth to the poor; this is the Gospel he preached to all, and writes about in all his Epistles. No doubt when Saul was on his way to Damascus before he was arrested by the voice of Jesus, he would be thinking "Whom am I going to fetch, to bind, to cast into prison and put to death in Damascus?" And who were they? Christ's poor who have the Gospel preached to them. In such a frame of mind he was ready for an entire revolution of ideas and direction of action, ready for conversion. Are we in this frame of mind? can such a change be worked in us? If we are not striving after holiness, purity of principle, sanctity of life, and if Christ is not already in our hearts, then we must like S. Paul be turned, be changed, the result must be that we break off from the old line of life, and at once take up the new; the final result of such a change would be "the

[1] Matt. xi. 3. [2] Matt. xi. 6.

poor have the Gospel preached to them." We have seen that the upshot of miracles was that a few poor believed; but that a whole life, principles and character of holiness, purity and sanctity is needed to convince and influence others. Therefore *I must* have Christ born in *me*. Where He treads flowers spring up after His footsteps, not crushed as He passes, but rising up again blooming in abundance where He has been, and all is given back to Him who gave it, and who deserves it. The question to ask ourselves (it shall be the lesson for next Wednesday) is, "Can such a change be wrought in me?"

XIX.[1]

March 27th, 1889.

The Conversion of S. Paul.

Acts ix. 1—19.

Can a 'Miracle' be wrought on *us*? and will it have those three characters, if so?

Saul the Persecutor. Negative Persecution more in vogue and more effective in this age than the Old Positive Persecution.

Non-action for Christ is our Testimony given against Christ. *Ease* is our protest made against Sacrifice.

The Social tone does not repel Sin—only Shame. The Social tone discounts Self-Sacrifice.

In full tide of all this, Individual careers still get checked—physically, morally, spiritually:—By *whom*? for *what*?

On the answer, and on whether Ease reasserts itself after all, issues incalculable depend.

Let us turn again to consider S. Paul's conversion. We have seen how it was a miracle, how it was a proof, and how S. Paul used it for a proof; but it would have been of much less value as a miracle, and as a proof of Christ's life and His intercourse with men, if it were not possible that such a miracle could be wrought in us also. Why is it told to us three times in the Acts? why does S. Paul allude to it so many times? Certainly not to magnify himself but to shew that the same miracle may be wrought in us; that however careless our habits and our way of life are, a change may be wrought in us as important to others as it is to ourselves; as important to others, even to those yet to come as the

[1] The earlier part of this Address was concerned with the subject alluded to in the last, "How do we know that we have the words of Christ?" Cf. note 2, p. 192.

conversion of S. Paul himself. No one can tell what the effect may be of a single soul turned from darkness to light. You know how we can trace bad blood from generation to generation; and among evil generations we may see some single beautiful character repeating itself in many forms. Even so, if such a miracle as this conversion were wrought in us, if we were changed thus by Christ coming and speaking to us, we should find indications of Christ's character springing up in us, we should find Christ shewing Himself in us, and should see that the life of Christ was beginning to be manifest in us. We should find worldliness changing into unworldliness; selfishness changing into love and consideration; and we should find in these things a proof that the power at work had not its origin in ourselves, but came from without.

Is it possible that a miracle could be wrought on you?

But when Christ approaches there is one easy way of preventing all this from happening, and of hardening our hearts so that even He cannot enter; and that is by nourishing the desire to go on in the old way, and yet to have the comfort of religion. Those who do this are sure that there is a great comfort in religion, that they who have it possess something which others do not, something which makes the whole difference to them when life is drawing to an end. If then we desire this comfort of religion, and yet keep things which we know are contrary to religion, if we make a compromise, and desire to keep Christ in our lives like a vein through marble—for I do not think that for a time this is totally impossible, although in time an awakening will come—this will make the heart as hard, smooth and impenetrable as marble. Then would come that condition which came to the King of Egypt after the great visitation. When the visitation was upon him he thought that he would obey God, but when the plague was over he thought that he could account for it by natural causes, and need not pay attention to it; and when visitations were multiplied he thought them remarkable coincidences, one produced by east wind, one by blight. Or, we should come to that condition of the Christian congregation which S. Paul speaks

There is one way of escaping it—If you are determined to keep any evil, but would like to find a comfort in religion, and would be so glad if a miracle could just satisfy you that there is something real in religion,

then no miracle would really affect you—you would find an explanation.

of when he says that they had eyes which did not see, ears which did not hear, so that they could not be converted: or, again, to the condition of the five brethren in the parable of whom Christ said that if they would not listen to the ordinary motives, the ordinary religion, a rising from the dead would not affect them.

"Saul! Saul!"—one's own name, cf. "Whence knowest thou me?"

So we, who may be, like S. Paul, struck by power from above; who may hear our own names called, as he heard the Voice, saying, "Saul, Saul;" who may know for a moment that we are called; if we do not say "Who art thou, Lord? What wilt thou have me to do?" we shall be like what Saul would have been if he had got up, shaken off the dust, mounted again and said only what a strange sunstroke he had had. This is quite possible, quite conceivable.

"Why persecutest thou me?" You think He can't say that.

Negative Persecution is the only one possible, but it is more effective.

We may think, perhaps, that Christ could not say to us "Why persecutest thou me?" Why not? Of course we are not guilty of positive persecution, and for a very good reason, because we couldn't be; but there is a great deal of negative hostility to "the Way," and I am not sure that negative hostility is not more effective than positive persecution. Positive persecution raises so much inconvenient sympathy with those who suffer, and that sympathy does check positive unkindness and persecution. But Christ's last injunction was to spread the Gospel over all countries; there is only one way of doing this, and if you won't help Missions you are saying in effect, "There is nothing in Christianity which makes it necessary to do so; it is not a deduction from my Christianity." Is not that equivalent to persecution? You cannot persecute the missionary or the convert, but it is negative persecution if you say that you will not help the missionary or the convert. If you will not help against slavery, will not help South London, or help to free the hospitals in London from debt; if you will not help in rescuing women and girls from bondage and worse; if you will not do anything to help religious education, this refusal is not the end of your action, but you are living witnesses against the obligation of doing so. If you do not help why should anyone? If you profess to be Christians, if you have Christian habits and prayers,

but do not fulfil the ordinances of Christ, or do the works which Christ inspires, you are living witnesses against there being, in your Christianity, any necessity for doing so. If your Christianity were such as to convince you that you ought to do these things, you would do them. I know you would do the most intrepid and gallant things on earth if you saw that you ought to; but if you do not do these things of Christ's are not you negative persecutors? Are you not acting against "the Way" as much as it is possible to do in this century? For the world, seeing your action, says, "These are Christians, and what do they more than others?" So Christ said to His disciples. "If ye love them that love you..." merely, "do not even the publicans the same[1]?" 'but if you are mine you must do my works.'

The world is looking on you and saying, "They do not do the works of Christ, but they are Christians; there is no Spirit among them, if there were they would do His works." That is the way in which the world speaks, denying that there is any Spirit of God in us, because, if there were, we should live by the Spirit.

You witness against there being any need for sacrifice. That is what your life teaches.

Further, there is not only this negative persecution, not only do our lives bear witness against there being any necessity for these works; but looked at on another side they bear witness against the necessity for sacrifice. What word would describe the aims of hundreds of thousands of us but the word *Ease?* Are we not taught to seek ease when we are little? Are we not so supplied with this world's goods, that if anything is missing it is made up to us? Is not ease set before the young—is not ease the law of our rising up and lying down, of our going out and coming in? As long as that is so, we, members of the Christian Church, are witnesses against the necessity for sacrifice; and if there is one thing that is true it is that the whole world is redeemed by sacrifice, and all holy lives, from Christ up to the present time, have been adding themselves up to take part in the redemption of the world by sacrifice. S. Paul says, "the love of Christ constraineth us[2]," and speaks of the

[1] Matt. v. 46. [2] 2 Cor. v. 14.

joy of his endeavour to fill up what remains of the sufferings of Christ[1].

Might I not say to many: "In society you smile on destroyers of virtue, you encourage scorn of virtue, you discount all efforts for good?"

But is even that the worst that can be said? Must we not say that there are many in society who positively smile on the destroyers of virtue, who welcome people who scorn all virtue, who welcome them to their conventional rank; and at the same time when efforts for good are made attribute low motives to those who make them? As those who stood round Christ and saw Him work His wonderful works said that He did them by Beelzebub, so such people attribute to the men who work for good, low motives, or spread about them that abominable doctrine that they are only putting off their reward to the next life. They do not say that their works are done by Beelzebub, because they do not believe in Beelzebub. Again, they say perhaps that such men do good because they cannot help it, and because it is their nature to do good. This is a denial of the spirit of Christ, which can take possession of us and constrain us.

In midst of all this you receive a shock or a check, you perceive a power somewhere about.

In the midst of these lives of ease we may receive a shock, physical, moral, or spiritual. It may be that some physical shock lays us prostrate; that by the death of one of our dear ones we are made to feel how close to this material world lies the unknown; or we may receive some spiritual shock such as we feel when Christ, who is Love, allows us to be persuaded for the time that He is not, so that we may feel keenly what the world would be without these beliefs that we have perhaps held so lightly. But—whatever the shock—we perceive by it that there is a power somewhere, and that by it our life is for a moment brought to a standstill. What do we do? Do we laugh? or do we say, "It was a faint, a sunstroke, an accident? My friends are not friends in Christ, they will give me up if I take it too seriously?" Do we shake ourselves, get up, ride on? or do we say, "I do see, I feel, I think that I am called; what am I to do?"—shall we say then, "Let someone take me by the hand and lead me on my journey?" Or, suppose we take the other line and ask, "Where does that

What do you do?

[1] Col. i. 24.

Voice come from? Who spoke to me? And what wilt Thou have me to do?" We shall not have all these questions answered in an instant like S. Paul. But remember this: S. Paul only for one moment saw the flash; and only for one moment you see Christ, then all is dark, quite dark and silent. You have to go quietly, keep still, until you have received the message; and you will probably receive it in the same manner as S. Paul received it; some friend will come and say, "Sister, receive thy sight." Then Christ is yours, and for ever. Let the love of Christ begin to work at once and shew you that sacrifice is eternal. Sacrifice will save the world; ease will ruin you. I saw a letter the other day from someone who was trying to be good but knew not how, who wrote, "I had got into a way of thinking that I was all that others thought me. Now suddenly I see that I am not that person at all." She was trying to do good, in her way, was seeking after it, like S. Paul on his terrible errand. She went on. "But then who am I? and what am I? I had taken for granted that I *did* deserve all the kind, loving things that were done towards me."

Do you ask, "Whence comes *that*? Who spoke? What dost Thou wish me to do?"

"I find I am not that person at all. Then who am I?" The writer has found out that since, and has had herself given back to her. Such changes are possible.

There is a man who was the governor of an eastern city, with great influence, which he used for the vilest purposes among the people. He has been home and has left the country again; and his purpose in coming home was to raise money that he might build a church, and bring a clergyman out who should undo what he had been doing. I cannot tell you his history, but Someone had called him, and he did not try to laugh it off, but rose and stood on his feet and said, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

Has there been the love of ease among us? has it made us negative persecutors? It will come back after conversion. After the Voice and the Presence have been known to you there will be a tremendous struggle to fit in the old and the new. It will shew itself in many ways; there will be an awkward interval before we have formed new habits; when we

It was the love of Ease which has made you a negative persecutor.

The love of Ease will come back on you when you are converted.

have forgotten a little of the old fretting and not yet realised the new delight. Ease, coming back, will make you feel that it is a great deal simpler to speak to poor people than to your own relatives; to take in hand the poor to whom you are not known, than to speak to relations who at first will not be very willing to listen. You will think that you may spare yourself the extreme uncomfortableness of talking to those with whom you have continual intercourse, and who are not willing to listen to you. It won't do if you yield to this. You will only have fitted in the new habits among the old, and the whole life will grow smooth and hard as marble.

On your answer to these questions depend issues incalculable.

Think how much depends on how you answer these questions:—"What Hand struck?" "What Voice speaks?" and "What must I do?" Incalculable issues depend on how you answer these questions; either disappointment and hardness, a hungering, yearning heart ever turning back to the moment when Christ's voice was heard and you did not listen—for it never will be as if you had not heard; or else, Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghost.

XX.

3rd April, 1889.

Conversion of S. Paul (*concluded*).

Acts ix. 19—30.

Saul's 'Retreat' in Arabia, Gal. i. 16; 'Days' at Damascus (*three years*, Gal. i. 18; cf. 1 Kings iii. 11, 1 Kings ii. 38, 39); his fortnight in Jerusalem, A.D. 40 or 41. Spread of Church elsewhere; close of third Persecution.

In his darkness 'he prayeth,' *v.* 11.

1. *Retirement* 'immediately,' Gal. i. 16: Brief, but its needfulness; not as an "Act," but for ourselves. The impressions of former knowledge about Christ reviewed. Life with Christ.

   It is ignorance of human nature to think 'Those had gone for nothing.' Our own 'unveilings' and 'buildings up' after contact with Christ.

2. *Difficulties* in trying to Witness. Own action in past. Humiliation. Misgivings of new friends. Contempt and anger of old ones. Saul sent *home*;—Work there shewn in xv. 41.

3. Growth and Gift of *Power*, *v.* 22. Compare 2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13 (Acts i. 8).

4. His two Topics: Jesus is Son of God, *v.* 20, is 'The Christ,' *v.* 22 (compare Gal. i. 16) and ours also. Insinuations as to modern Christian teachers.

   'Awe' and 'Comfort' of the Church. Its secret of Growth.

After his blindness and after the baptism it was necessary for Saul to recruit his strength.

ix. *vv.* 19—23. "And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them which called on this Name? And he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him."

Those who are not familiar with the Greek or Hebrew use might suppose that "certain days" meant a short interval of time; but it is in reality an expression which may be used for any length of time. Christ said He would be with the disciples "all the days" until His coming again; and we read (1 Kings iii. 11), "God said...because...thou hast not asked for thyself many days," or "long life." So here the expression in *vv.* 19 and 23 might mean a long time or even a life-time.

If we turn to the Epistle to the Galatians we shall see how long the time was. S. Paul gives his own sketch of this period (i. *vv.* 15—18). "But when it was the good pleasure of God...to reveal His Son in me...I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus, then after *three years* I went up..."

So that these "many days" from the time of his conversion to his first visit to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26) means, as we find from the account in Galatians, about three years. And we find "many days" used for just this period of three years in the account of the way in which Solomon confined Shimei, the blasphemer of his father, to his own house, where Shimei agreed to remain; Solomon telling him that if he left it he should be executed (1 Kings ii. 36—40). Shimei, it is said, remained "many days" in Jerusalem (*v.* 38); and "it came to

pass at the end of *three years...*" (*v.* 39). I mention this to shew there is no discrepancy in this respect between the account in Galatians and that in the Acts.

We will look now a-field a little and see what was happening elsewhere.

Just before the conversion of S. Paul we read in the eighth chapter that Philip preached in Samaria, and that when the Apostles heard that Samaria had received the word they sent down Peter and John (*v.* 14).

During the three years communities in Samaria get compacted into one Church.

In the 31st verse of this ninth chapter we find a mention of the Church as having spread through Samaria; for three years after the conversion of S. Paul, it is recorded that "the churches throughout Judaea and Galilee *and Samaria* had peace, being edified." We must realise the connection of the work, how Christianity was beginning to spread, how the Churches (or as the earlier manuscripts give it—"the Church") were being welded into one.

The persecution closes, the Jews, themselves in trouble; have lost their power to arrest him at once.

There is another curious historical point here to notice. During these three years the magisterial power of the chief persons among the Jews had very much declined. At the beginning of the period Saul was going with letters from the High Priest to arrest the Christians; at the end of it the Jews could not openly arrest Saul, but had to make a plot for his assassination and to watch the gates of Damascus.

v. 24. "Their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him."

This corresponds with what we know from other sources about the curtailment of the liberty of the Jews.

Again, it is said (*v.* 31) that the Church had rest: that is to say, this persecution of which Saul was the principal figure, in which he had been so vigorous a zealot—a persecution which also raged in other directions, came to an end. We know from secular history that the Jews were brought very low about this time. The Emperor who was nearly mad wanted to put up his own statue in the temple; the Jews were occupied in trying to defend the temple against this idolatrous innovation, and thus the persecution ceased.

vv. 25, 26. "But his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket. And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple."

Then to Jerusalem for 15 days, not as a learner.

From the Epistle to the Galatians we see that S. Paul's visit to Jerusalem was only for 15 days. During that time he was at first feared by the disciples, and then Barnabas—who may have been his fellow-student at Tarsus—brought him to the disciples.

v. 27. "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus."

Tarsus was just opposite Cyprus, where Barnabas in all probability had his estate[1]. Here again is a point which shews the truthfulness of the account. We are not told why it was Barnabas who took him and shewed him to be a genuine man; but we are told that Barnabas was a Cypriot of property, and we are left to deduce that he may have been educated at Tarsus, so that the friendship with Saul may probably have begun in early life.

vv. 28—30. "And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.'

I shall come back again to this period to shew what it was that S. Paul taught when he began to preach, but shortly there were two things: first he taught in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God; but further it was important in dealing with the Jews to shew the fulfilment of prophecy in Christ. Thus S. Paul taught, "proving that this is the Christ," the Messiah (*v.* 22).

His two immediate topics: (1) The Son of God. (2) The Christos.

But we are not only told in the New Testament of S. Paul's preaching, we are given also his inner history,

[1] Cf. pp. 46, 77.

and the whole course of this is deduced from two separate books,—the Acts, which records his actions, and his letters. Historians cannot produce any picture so complete as that given by these letters and the Acts, points so lightly touched, fitting in so subtly with the history of the time.

In the days of darkness he prayeth.

"Behold he prayeth."—That is the first and right attitude of a man thus smitten in the midst of his pride, in the midst of his confidence blinded; taken from his cortège, and ministered to by one of the despised people whom he came to persecute. Ananias was afraid of coming until he heard the Lord's word—"behold he prayeth"—Saul was praying in the darkness. Think of the darkness which comes over us; and we know that this is the only way in which we too shall be built up again. Sightless, foodless, in darkness, he was praying.

His retirement to "Arabia" probably at once, εὐθέως, Gal. i. 16; probably not long; not important to S. Luke's narrative of Acts, all-important to Paul's Life.

The next step is not given in the Acts, for it is not really an Act; it has here not to do with the preaching of the Gospel, but is given in S. Paul's letter to the Galatians—"Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus[1]." It is easy to know why he went into Arabia, the only lonely region where he could go—he went to be alone. Probably he was not there for very long; the time was not important enough to form a part of S. Luke's account in the Acts, but it was all-important to the formation of S. Paul's inner character. Perhaps it is not foolish to think that he went there for forty days, as Moses was forty days in the mount, Elijah forty days in Horeb, Christ forty days in the wilderness before He began His ministry. S. Paul must have known all about Moses and Elijah and about the Lord (as he knew that he was now a chosen vessel of Christ), and it is very likely that he would go for some such period. It was a great period in his inner life, a time to get his thoughts in order, and put together what he knew of Jesus Christ, to think how he should build himself up, how arrange his work for souls, first among the Jews at Damascus; and then how he should fulfil

[1] Gal. i. 16, 17.

the strange mission which had been appointed him among the Gentiles, the nations who did not even know Moses.

Great want of knowledge of man to say all [that Saul] had known of Jesus, of Stephen's arguments, death, 'angel-face' had gone for nothing.

He tells us particularly that he "conferred not with flesh and blood," not even with the Apostles. But it shews great ignorance to say that all that he hitherto knew of Christ, all Stephen's arguments and Stephen's angel-face before the Council, went for nothing; and that after one vision he made no more inquiries about the Gospel which he preached. Think who he was—the disciple of Gamaliel, the leading genius among his scholars, living probably in the school of Gamaliel while the Pharisees and Scribes were disputing about the young rabbi Jesus. It was impossible that Saul should not know all about Him—about His life, His crucifixion. He had known all this, but he had taken a wrong view of it; and it was that wrong view which enabled him to hear Stephen and yet to stand by while Stephen was executed. He wanted no more *evidence*. This he had already sufficiently. What he had needed was a new way of looking at the evidence.

All that had wrought in him, and wrought in him for ever.

Then what were the processes and state of his mind when he was riding to Damascus? 'Can my mission be wrong? Is it possible that Jesus was not a false teacher, but that it was His suffering that is told in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah? Was it just possible that Jesus may have been what He said He was?'

Three stages, (1) possibility that He was Son of God. (2) Probability. (3) Christ Himself *there*.

Cannot you realise how hour after hour, as Saul rode along, from thinking that this was just possible, he began to think that it was probable, that he had always known there was much to be said for this view of the question; and now that he was on an errand of death, going to put to death people who were glad to die, it must have occurred to him, 'Was it not possible that Jesus may have been what He said He was? Was there anyone who would die for the Pharisees' teaching, or any for the doctrine of the Sadducees?' but Stephen had died for Jesus; he himself had seen Stephen's blood flow and knew that there were hundreds ready to die for Jesus; Saul knew that His followers were so spreading that unless the Pharisaic party excised them root and branch they would not check their progress.

Then Saul sees Jesus, who takes away his sight, and gives him an inner illumination; he knew that he saw Him, and Ananias speaks so of Him—'He that was seen by thee in the way.' It shews a terrible ignorance of human nature to say that S. Paul ought to have gone back to Jerusalem, to inquire and to sift evidence. What could be more full than his knowledge of Christ's life? He had grown more and more impressed by it, had had his misgivings deepened into certainties; and in the midst of this Christ's hand touches into life all that had been working in him, all that might, but for this touch, have worked in him for ever. Saul did not need more evidence, but a new way of looking at the facts.

There was ὁ ὀφθείς.

He went off for his [40] days to look at all he knew in the light of the fact that he had seen *Him*, he was now taught by Him, he had continuous unveiling.

There is a homely metaphor, but one which illustrates this well. When one looks into a stereoscope at the double picture of a bust, one first sees both busts, flat, as they are represented, then they melt into one as the eyes get into focus, the images flash together and the bust seems to stand out solidly. So Saul's mind focussed at one moment what he had known. Everything had been before him clearly already; Gamaliel himself said it was dangerous meddling with the Christians. Saul was imbued with this idea, but was going against his master's counsel. His master's advice and his own knowledge had been bringing him to the point all the time. Now he went away for forty days to look at all he knew in this new light and he went to be taught by Christ[1]. From that time he had the continuous teaching of Christ, and what else should a man seek for who had the teaching of Christ?

Our own unveilings and buildings up after our contact with Christ.

Are there not things which answer to this in our own experience? Are we not in our souls and spirits always seeing these unveilings? We see the same things we have always seen, but in a new light; things about conscience, about our duties, our relation to God. When we see things in a new light are we not astonished to think that we took so low a view of them in the past? One moment of contact with Christ is enough to transform not the facts, but the view taken of them; to change the low poor view into a condition of thought and action which we may set before Christ.

[1] Cf. also *The Apocalypse, a Study*, Essay IV. § 4.

Great want in modern life to get thoughts in order—review life—learn of Christ.

Happy are you if you can have a retreat like this retreat of S. Paul's. Even the space of two or three quiet days for looking at the facts of the life of Christ and His words, undistracted, brings such blessings. I have only twice or thrice enjoyed such times, but they have been marked moments to me. But if you make arrangements for such times do not put yourselves into the hands of someone who has fancies, who lays stress on one habit, one kind of devotion, one bit of discipline. The retreat is spoilt if you only come out with one fancy more, even if that fancy is a good fancy; but try alone, or with the help of someone else to put the whole of your life before you, to see Christ's life and work and, as much as you can, take in the blessing.

Again, think of this—here is the case of a great man, with great power, extraordinary influence, a spiritual king, a man who has lamented his whole past, who has been forgiven, for Christ has spoken to him, and is with him; is the history of his life henceforward a serene, glorious history? And if we have been with God, if we have been lifted into a higher plane, have we a right to expect that our life shall always go on serenely and gloriously in this higher plane? Look at S. Paul's difficulties and see how they are our own.

Difficulties in trying to witness to any purpose, regardless of ease—witness against Him so easy.

I spoke last time of the naturalness with which we bear witness against Christ if we are aiming at ease. All that we do not do, and ought to do is proof to the world that Christianity does not require it of us. The world says that there is a difference between what we think and say (and believe perhaps), and what others say; but where, it asks, is the fruit of this? So the things which we leave undone are a great evidence against Christianity. It is easy to bear witness so, and we go on seeking ease in religion as in other things—seeking comfort, help, exaltation in religion, combined with the pleasures of a worldly life. There is a little pain perhaps but it is soon over, and there comes the serene, smooth condition of a heart quietly hardened in which the new belief becomes like a beautiful vein in marble, not living, warm, beating, but crystallised, smooth and fair.

It is a very different thing to bear witness for Christ.

The witness I have been speaking of is easily given, is most powerful evidence, but to bear witness *for* Him is very different.

Consider the case of S. Paul. The first thing that happened was that he became subject to his own persecution. All that he had been doing, living, working out, came on him. He had taught the Jews how to persecute; their minds had not been changed as his had, and the Jews took counsel to kill him. They could not now, in consequence of the rapid decline of the magisterial powers, do what he had been able to do; but they could continue in an underhand way the persecution which he had carried on openly. So they watched the gates, and the disciples took him by night and let him down over the wall in a basket, or, as is more probable, through one of the lattices in the wall. There is still a lattice shewn in Damascus through which he was said to have been let down. The same word is here used as for those baskets in which were collected the fragments of the loaves and fishes when the four thousand were fed.

1. At once subject to his own persecution.

2. Damascene Jews. Escape a humiliation.

Was not this a striking advance? "Who is weak and I am not weak[1]?" What could be more humiliating than to come in on a war-horse, and go out in a basket? In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 33) S. Paul mentions this as one of the trials which he underwent. A terrible humiliation, and one might think he would rather die than suffer it. But it was not for him to die: he goes to Jerusalem, hoping to find new friends among the Christians there if the old ones would not receive him. Put the escape from Damascus side by side with the arrival at Jerusalem. Instead of being welcomed by the disciples as one who had been doing much for them in Damascus, he finds they think it hopeless to imagine that Saul can be anything but an enemy, and more dangerous as a secret enemy than before in his open fury.

3. Mistrust of Christians.

He disputed with the Hellenists[2]:—that is, Greeks who had adopted the Jewish religion, or Jews who had lived in Greece, and who therefore combined certain tendencies of both nations, and were never on good terms with the Jews.

4. Hostility of old friends—his old associates—Hellenists.

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 29. [2] Cf. p. 105.

The Libertines who made the attack on Stephen were Hellenists, and Paul had united with them; these, his old allies, would hate him most. This accounts for the instant remark after the account of the beginning of his work that he disputed with the Grecians—finding, as he says in the Corinthians, that the "Cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness": here among the Grecians he would have both lines of thought combined against his preaching. The Jews could not believe that the Messiah could be subject to such ignominy as was poured out on Jesus. The Greeks were accustomed to the idea of incarnation in their own religion, and it was therefore not so strange to them to be told that God had become man; that was not to them a stumblingblock, but they would think it a piece of folly to imagine that a God who had designs for the good of mankind should be put into such a position. These Hellenists were both Jews and Greeks, and held both views. Christ was to them both a stumblingblock and folly. These were the old friends and advisers whom Saul had to face. This was not the worst of it—the disciples found they could not ensure his safety and so sent him home. Perhaps this was a worse trial and a severer proof of faith than anything else. His life was more likely to be safe, but he was sent to be a prophet in his own country; and that perhaps in the beginning of his ministry was more trying than anything else could be.

To them the Cross a μωρία and a σκάνδαλον.

Saul sent home—as you are—a worse trial.

Let me point out a little incidental proof that he did go home. The Acts does not say a word about what he did when he was there, and we might ask whether he went on working or lived in retirement. We are not told directly, but if we turn to Acts xv. 41 we shall see that he went through Syria and Cilicia *confirming* the Churches. By the time that he went on this journey, then, the Churches were already founded; but there is no record of *how* they were formed, unless we find it in these words—that he went to Tarsus.

The effect indicated, xv. 41.

We have marked the increase of power (*v.* 22) under all these difficulties—are these difficulties not our own? Firstly

His increase of Power.

as regards our past lives—are we not, when the change of view comes, subject to what we ourselves made, as Saul was subject to the persecution he had raised? But in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of the "thorn in the flesh," he records the promise of God that power shall be made perfect in weakness[1]. Then there are many humiliations, new friends misdoubting us, old friends opposing us, we are sent home. We shall never have the work complete until we go home; it is easy to work among strangers, but difficult to speak the things of God to those among whom we have lived for thirty or forty years, and to whom we never said a word. It has to be done sooner or later.

Surely when we find this difficulty of speaking about holy things to those who are near us at home we may take this as a promise for ourselves, that strength will be given us. If Christ has sent us and spoken to us let us take this blessed hope and consolation for ourselves. In that glorious increase of power will come the words that you ought to speak in order to testify for Christ.

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9 and cf. Phil. iv. 13.

XXI.

10 *April*, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts ix. 31—43.

Aeneas, Tabitha.

Thread of 'Acts of Peter' now taken up and pursued until formation of Gentile Centre at Antioch, chap. xii, 25, xiii. The significance of these two Threads.

Lydda, The Sharon, Joppa—footsteps of Philip.

True notes of Miracle—*working* of the Kingdom of God—hiddenly in Sick Chamber and Death Chamber: not offered as "Proofs," but from them Faith spreads—*vv.* 35, 42.

1. "Mainly nervous disorders." Are any worse? are they understood? cured by science? at a word?—nearest to springs of thought and life.

2. Death not 'nervous.'
(The old legend of Joppa.) Dorcas' works. Peter's Prayer. The Teacher's own advance in Faith, in Comprehensiveness, 43.

To return to effects:—It was this sense of a Kingdom *at work* which won mankind. A Power in the world making for Holiness, Strength, Life.

It is the want of this sense which now makes progress pause.

It is not a question of MSS. and authorship but of *our* Reality.

What is the secret of Sincerity? "The Inner Yoke."

The Inner Life is the real life, Matt. vi. 18—and it is spoiled for most of us because we will not take that Yoke on us.

That we do not is visible to all observers.

The Sincerity of the Christians would win Cities new as well as old.

Acts ix. 31. "So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied."

Phobos and Paraclesis, a noble pair. Our portion.

These are the two noblest steeds of the soul[1], Fear and Comfort together; the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Fear to chasten; we must remember that there is a holy fear. Our Lord Himself says that we are not to fear the destroyer of the body, but that we are to fear Him who has power to cast both soul and body into hell[2]; for although S. John tells us that perfect love casts out fear[3], it is only perfect love which does so; fear is not to be cast out until love is perfect. For fear is our chastening, and fear is not abolished until chastening has attained its end. S. John is speaking of the *end* when he says that perfect love casts out fear. "Fear" means torment or chastening, and chastening yields its perfect fruit[4]. It would be sad if fear passed away. Fear is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. When children are confirmed we pray that they may receive the gifts of the Spirit and that they may be filled with the Spirit of God's holy fear. We cannot say that even in the last most triumphant time fear passes away. At times indeed S. Paul does speak with great certainty of the crown laid up for him[5], but he says in the Epistle which has the most certain joyfulness of tone, "I count not myself yet to have apprehended[6]." There is still chastening going on in these last perfect hours wherever God's dealing is seen.

"The fear of God and the comfort of the Spirit." The word translated comfort is παράκλησις, which means a "cheering forward." When the Greek fleets rushed to battle against the Persians the poet says that 'ship παρεκάλει "cheered on" ship[7].' It means comfort not only in sadness but keeping the spirit high in hours of enjoyment; Christ

[1] Cf. Phaedr. p. 245 f.
[2] Lu. xii. 5.
[3] 1 Jo. iv. 18.
[4] Cf. Heb. xii. 11.
[5] 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.
[6] Phil. iii. 13.
[7] Aeschylus, *Persae*, v. 380.

comforted in this way when He said "Son, be of good cheer" to the poor broken-down man who thought there was no hope for him here or hereafter[1].

If we can apply these two things to ourselves we shall need nothing else to make us happy. It is quite clear from this that it is possible to know that the Holy Ghost is cheering us on; that we may be sure that the bright hope we feel towards God is not the action of animal spirits, but the comfort of the Holy Ghost, if once we have seen Him.

Paraclesis implies 'speaking' under Guidance, "Tact" and "Grace."

What a glorious picture of the Church this is; would that we could say this of our own! We are to give this comfort to one another. I am asked sometimes if we are to give it "in season and out of season." Not out of season; S. Paul means nothing of the sort. Of all the people who ought to have tact Christian women most should have it. Tact is the gift of God, and can be indefinitely multiplied. If people talk without tact about religious matters we may be sure that they do not do so *only* about religious matters. Think of the meaning of "grace." Why did Christians think the gift of God should be called "grace?" Simply because they saw the gift of God *was* grace to those who received it. The word does not mean two totally different things in our use of it. If there is a want of grace and tact about Christians we must forgive it on account of their zeal; but that want of tact is not what the Spirit gives, but what the Spirit has not yet cleared away from them. Want of tact never shews itself in this matter alone; but we see the sharpness of the contrast when a glorious subject is spoken of by people with little tact; the discord is harsher because the subject is of such might and beauty, and it pains even those who are not religious. Therefore seek that the comfort of the Holy Ghost may be in your own hearts, and that you may be the bearers of παράκλησις to others; and pray earnestly that you may do it with tact. S. Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt[2]." With 'salt'; the wit of the Athenian, without which he could not open his lips; with

[1] Matt. ix. 2. [2] Col. iv. 6.

humour and grace. Thus what is beautiful in itself will come acceptably and pleasantly in the right place and the right manner.

With this description of the Church we have closed one Act of our history. It is time to go back, as S. Luke does, and take up another thread. From this place for some chapters we read of the Acts of S. Peter.

Some critics have tried to make out that there was an antagonism between the Petrine and Pauline schools: that the teaching of S. Peter and S. Paul was strongly contrasted, and their schools yet more so. But we have S. Paul's own account of the matter[1], and S. Peter's opinion of S. Paul[2]. We have both S. Luke's and S. Paul's account. And if we find the thread S. Luke now follows out, in telling the Acts of Peter, very different to that which he has just dropped, this is as it ought to be. It was a very different thing to present Christ to the Jews, with their special gifts, to inform the Israel of God, making it freer than before; and to present Him to the Greeks and Romans, who had gifts the Jews had not. It was impossible that there should not be points of contact and points of collision. S. Paul describes one such collision[3], the end of which is perfect peace. Here in S. Luke's writing there is not the least appearance of antagonism. The contrast is presented to us like the two poles of a magnet, the duality of electricity. No truth can be conveyed without antithesis. It must present opposite sides in order that we may thoroughly apprehend its constitution. Our bodies and minds both teach us that. To give those we educate a true idea of any subject we must present on different sides a truth, which thus appears to be a paradox, but out of this apparent contradiction grows a harmony which we should never see otherwise. So in a stereoscope we could

[1] Gal. i.—iii.

[2] Probably a reference to 2 Pet. iii. 15. It must be observed that it was not the point in these addresses to examine minutely questions of criticism, but occasionally to meet popular objections and to give certain general principles whose application in questions of criticism is not infrequently overlooked. Cf. note, p. 192 and Editor's Preface.

[3] Gal. iii.

not see the picture as if it were solid but for the two lenses, and with one eye we could not test the solidity. We shall trace throughout the Acts contrasts and comparisons, but they will blend, if only we are faithful and honest; if we lay full stress upon the contrasts we shall get a view of the solid truth. If we pretended that S. Peter and S. Paul taught exactly the same things we should be accusing them of want of insight and discretion; but we shall see that there is one Christ, one doctrine, in their teaching.

We see two threads taken up. S. Luke now having carried S. Paul up to a certain point lays down the thread of his history to trace for us that of S. Peter. This is carried on to ch. xii. 25, when we are introduced to the formation of a great Gentile centre at Antioch, so that from that time there are not only two great teachers, but two great centres, Antioch and Jerusalem.

Lydda. The Saron, still Philip's field.

We go on then with the Acts of S. Peter. You remember that after Philip had baptized the eunuch he passed through the parts of Samaria until he came to Caesarea, traversing the old Philistine country, Sharon. Philip had preached as he went until he got to Caesarea, and we find him there some time after with four daughters who prophesy[1].

S. Peter goes in the footsteps of Philip. He and S. John had gone down after Philip the Evangelist to Samaria, and laid their hands on those whom Philip had baptized. S. Peter is travelling in his footsteps still in the district of Lydda.

vv. 32—35. "And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee; arise and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord."

You who have been to the Holy Land will have passed through this part, landing at Joppa, and you will remember the wonderful fertility of the land which was once called Lud.

[1] Acts xxi. 9.

Wherever people strike through the soil they come to a river which keeps the soil fertile. This part was the great corn-land of the Philistines; and a glorious narcissus, which is perhaps the 'Rose of Sharon,' scents the air[1]. This district is full of stories of Samson and of old Greek legends—*Aeneas* the man whom Peter healed has a classical name.

vv. 36, 37. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." Tabitha means a gazelle or fawn, a word which gives an idea of the grace of her ministry to the poor. "And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber."

They did not know what Peter was likely to do, but they wanted his sympathy and wanted him to be there before they took her the next day to the tomb.

vv. 38—41. "And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not to come unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive."

It is a physician who describes this; Luke the physician, who tells us accurately how Aeneas was bedridden, a paralytic for eight years, now describes how Dorcas, lying still, opened her eyes—it is just one of the points a physician would tell—and seeing Peter sat up and he gave her his hand and she rose.

vv. 42, 43. "And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner."

[1] More probably the Lotus *Nelumbium speciosum*, cf. article on '*The Rose of Sharon*,' by P. E. Newberry, *The Garden*, Jan. 22, 1887.

True aspect of miracles. The working of the Kingdom of God.

The first point to notice here is how the true aspect of miracles is brought out. There is no semblance of *advertising* them; Peter does not say even to the saints that he will do the miracle; there is no publication of it afterwards, no one coming forward and saying "here is the divine power."

The Sick Chamber. The Chamber of Death.

Neither miracle was done in a public place; one in a sick chamber, the other in the chamber of death; yet all Lydda and Joppa turned unto the Lord, because they could not help it; for the new life of Dorcas became known.

Belief spreads as "They saw him," "it became known." "They turned to the Lord," "Believed on the Lord."

There is no glorification of Peter here: Peter's first word is "Christ healeth thee," and the people turned unto the Lord; they knew it was the same Jesus Christ who had been going about doing good, they knew and felt that He was there.

This exactly illustrates the point I have been trying to explain, that the miracles were not worked as proofs; it is only in modern times when people have been casting about for proofs that they have been considered in that light.

1. Aeneas. "Nervous" disorders. Are there any worse cases? Do our doctors cure them? Do they understand them?

The clear description of Aeneas reads as a physician's note—for eight years a bed-ridden paralytic; but it may be said "How is it certain that Aeneas was really paralytic? It might easily be that some nervous disorder which can be affected by sudden surprise had taken this form in him?"

Are there any diseases worse than nervous disorders? is there anything so dreadful as to see a strong man turn melancholy and irresolute, not able to make up his mind about anything, even if he is not absolutely paralytic—to see a beautiful girl prostrate only from a nervous disorder? 'Only nervous'—but who is to cure it? Do not physicians say that they do not understand such disorders? "Nervous" is only a word used to describe them; if doctors did understand them they would understand all the mysteries of life and death, for these are so near the springs of life. Let a man supply a surprise which shall instantly heal such, if he knows the way to heal: let him say "You are but nervous, shake it off, arise, go about your ordinary duties." The poor sufferer would be provoked to smile by this if anything could

make him smile. "I know it," he would say, "as well as you do, but I can't *do* it."

But here comes in someone and says "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Suppose even that a thunderstorm, a sudden shock, could, as in stories we have heard, restore a sense a long time useless, how unless Christ were here should a plain fisherman come and say "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole", and it be done?

"Nervous" cure wrought to the moment.

But in any case death is not nervous. There was a strange story at Joppa of Andromeda put out on the rocks by the sea, chained to a stone in all her beauty for a monster to devour; and the story tells how there came a bright young hero Perseus, who drew his sword, smote the monster and killed him. It is only a coincidence, but how strange that in this place where the legend tells how a maid was devoted to death, how death was conquered and the maiden delivered, that Peter should raise "the gazelle" from sleeping the sleep of death and give her back to those who loved her.

2. Death is not a "nervous" affection.

Did S. Peter know himself that he was going to raise her? I cannot answer that question; I think not. They sent for him because they wanted the strong consolation of the man Christ called "the piece of Rock." They wanted that man's strong faith and character to be with them in their desolation.

"He came and put them all forth." Cannot we imagine the absorption of his prayer? he was there not knowing what he would do, not knowing what would happen, but taking her and himself into the presence of Him who was his living King and God, in perfect assurance of the presence of his Master with him, and with the memory of that time when at Jairus' house, all having been put forth, Christ said to the maid, "Talitha cumi." So now he says, "Tabitha (gazelle) arise." Then her eyes open, her vision is clear; she sat up and he raised her to her feet. She had died in Christ: perhaps it was not a slight sacrifice that she should be called back, having gone to her rest; and yet perhaps she was glad to come back to the sisters with whom she had worked—her workers' league. Yet she had to die again. She had come back from that sweet rest which S. Paul speaks of,

The absolute absorption of Peter's prayer—unseen—alone with the dead. At last the word TA$^{L}_{B}$ITHA CVMI.

saying that he does not know whether he ought to desire to depart to be with the Lord "which is far better[1]," or to stay for the sakes of those to whom he had preached; but he gives himself into the hands of Christ. So though her life remained to lay down again, and there remained the agony of dying to go through once more, Dorcas like Paul must have been ready to live on or die in the Lord.

Inner progress preparing him. Peter getting rid of the notion of 'defilement.'

And to S. Peter what a preparation this was for the time that was to come when, as his Master had told him, he would be no longer young as he had been, no longer strong as when he marched along and the Lord had told him to follow Him and not mind what would come. "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old...another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not[2]." So Jesus had spoken to him in the cool of the day after the miraculous draught of fishes. It was a preparation for that time when he, going as he was bidden, came and found Dorcas dead; when, putting them all out, he prayed and then rising spoke the bold word which, if it had not been answered, would have stamped him for himself as an adventurer, tempting God. But God was with him.

What a revelation for him (irrespective of the effect on the people) that he walked henceforth encompassed with the Kingdom of God, that the Kingdom of God would blossom around his feet as around his Master's.

"At the house of Simon the tanner." What strange words to fall on the ear of men who thought the trade of a tanner so dishonourable, that if a man who was a tanner engaged a girl to marry him without telling her that he was a tanner, the law declared the marriage void. It was so because the trade involved so much contact with death and uncleanness. It is not without meaning, surely, that we are told that he tarried at the house of Simon the tanner. At the house of Simon he had the great vision

[1] Phil. i. 23—26.
[2] Jo. xxi. 18—20.

which shewed him that henceforth there was no difference between the clean and unclean, that Christ's Kingdom had come and made all things clean; the vision which shewed him that he was not to say any more, as he then said with pride, "I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."

When S. Peter lodged with Simon the tanner there was already dawning on his soul the vision that God through His Kingdom was cleansing the Earth. It was this which gave people the sense that the power of God was in the world, that the power of God was making for holiness, for strength in the paralytic, for life in Tabitha; and they saw that all these things were signs of a greater strength given to weakness, of a mightier life conquering a more powerful death; they saw the Kingdom of God spread rapidly.

Effects in Conversion. It was this sense of the Kingdom of God being at work, a power in the world, making for Holiness, for Strength, for Life, which won mankind.

Why is it not spreading so now? This is not a question of manuscripts and of authorships; such questions would soon be settled if there were visible in the Christian life the power that makes for holiness. But many of us even if we were saints would be ashamed of people thinking us so; or of their knowing that we think our inner life must be touched by no defilement. We see the strength of most people overcome by love of ease, by thinking what people will say, by the fear of losing—what? something indefinite.

What is it which is *not* winning them just now? The absence of any clear distinct sight of the same.

Holiness. You hide it. You are afraid people should think you want to be a saint.

Strength. You are overcome by your own love of ease.

Life. Has Christianity given you "*New* Life?"

Do people see Christianity making for life? They cannot see this in us. What is it we want then? is it sincerity?

Preachers' sincerity [insinuation untrue].

I do not believe that the clergy, your teachers, whatever faults they have, are wanting in sincerity of intention. Those who want to draw you away from them tell you that your teachers know one thing and teach another; that is not true. It is not true that criticism has destroyed the New Testament for them. Suppose the Sermon on the Mount were forged, who made it? Was it S. Matthew if not Christ? And who then made parts of S. Luke, which are perhaps still more wonderful? Who was the author of the parables if not Christ? Was S. Luke the author of the parables of the Prodigal Son, or the Lost Money? You must notice that this supposititious case would not be parallel to Plato's representation of

If the Sermon on the Mount were a *cento* who made the sayings? Matthew the Forger?

If Luke made that portion which he only relates

Luke was more wonderful than Christ and so unsuspected.

Socrates, for there we understand from the first that Socrates was a great man, but Plato greater, and that Plato puts his own words into the mouth of Socrates to draw out the conclusion which can be deduced from the teaching of Socrates. Did S. John invent the passage about the Vine and that last prayer? If so he was more wonderful than Christ[1].

[Really a question of] People's sincerity—yours. "Inner Yoke."

But in reality it is not intellectual sincerity but spiritual sincerity you are in want of. What does such sincerity consist in? It consists in taking the inner yoke. The conviction has come into our minds;—we know our Master is true, we would follow Him, but we cannot part with the last imagination, the last longing for the things of this world. You know that when the furnace is full, and the metal issues in a fiery stream a man can dip his hand in water and plunge it into the metal, because the water is converted to steam and keeps the fiery stream from touching it. So when the Holy Spirit pours His fiery stream upon us, we may dip our hearts in cold water so that the Spirit cannot touch us.

The last lingering.

The Inner Life is the only Life.

We are not wanting to live the inner life; but the inner life is the only life. Our Lord says, speaking of the worst and most fleshly sins, that they are committed in the soul, because the inner life is the only life before God[2]. We must lead this life in sincerity in the sight of God. If you will cleanse and discipline your heart and feelings and keep them true and strong the rest of your life will lift itself up.

You lament and would fain see reformed London and Society. The Existence of a Body *sincere* would change London.

You and I, all of us, lament that we fail to see in the society of London the existence of any body of people living the inner life. Such a society would change all London; it would have more effect than the healing of a paralytic, it would be a perfect witness that Christ was true, while our shadowy half-doings are witnessing against Him. If we were to turn to the inner life and make that true there would be in the heart of London a power by which the Kingdom of God would gain possession of the world. Every word in the Acts tells us that this is the way in which the Kingdom of God takes possession.

[1] Cf. the argument drawn out in *Fishers of Men* by Archbishop Benson, pp. 87 ff.

[2] Matt. v. 28.

XXII.

8th May, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts x. 1—24.

Cornelius.

The Seeker and the Teller.

Cornelius. (Luke at Caesarea xxi., xxiv. 27: Philip at Caesarea.)

Difficulties overcome: regiment; household; had asserted the right to inquire and to live; devotions at hour of afternoon service.

A world-figure.

Prayers and Alms of Heathen Seekers after God are for 'a memorial.' Cf. Lev. ii. 2, &c. Cornelius owned the Light, S. John i. 8, though he had not identified its source.

Thirteenth Article.

Have *we* a duty toward far-off inquirers? Do *they* ask for us? How can the stream, S. John iv. 14, stay?

Peter changed name—changed prejudice.

'In ecstasy' (while the heathen's vision was 'openly,' *v.* 3).

God's use of his thoughts as always—of ours. That use very delicate, easily silenced by insincerity. Inner Life the only Life. Meditate on our own Vision as it passes and listen to Voices *then* heard.

We have our part even in God's Visions sent to us. The Angel did not instruct Cornelius.

May I now say again what I said last year? If it is good for us to meet together, if it is good for us, as it must be, to examine ourselves, to pray together, will you make an act of self-denial about it, will you make a rule of coming here

through this trying time? When the burden of duty is so heavy, and so tiring, it is good for us to come to a quiet place. Will you then, as you did last year, make it almost a point of honour to put aside things which depend only on yourselves, and come to stand before God? You are arriving at a time when you ought to feel that your prayers can make a great impression in the direction in which you would wish them to have effect. Would it not be possible for you to meet together among yourselves? For the more we go on the more we feel the strength of temptation, the power of seductive evil, such as has hardly existed anywhere before, bad as the antient cities were. The temptations are so hidden and lurking that one may compare the condition of society to two streams flowing, the one from rocky country, the other from flat country, but coming together in one channel, so that it would be difficult to know which stream one was in. Would it not be possible for a few believers, a few friends, to meet together and make a few simple prayers of their own? Might it not be possible to use a few silent moments before we begin service, and here in this place, send up a stream of silent intercession? I only ask you to think if this is possible; I do not want to ask what is impossible.

I began the Acts of Peter last time, and I want as we proceed to shew how we see in them the whole power of the Christian Church.

v. 1. "Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band."

Band here means "cohort." The legions were subdivided into cohorts, which consisted of either five or ten centuries; the centurions of whom we read in the Acts were much like our non-commissioned officers, but had also a certain rank. We read of one in the Gospels building a synagogue at Capernaum[1]. A centurion might be so great a man that all the town in which he was would look up to him. These cohorts had names like our own regiments, and this—the

[1] Lu. vii. 1.

Italian cohort—would be chiefly composed of men from Italy.

vv. 2—4. "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God."

Just remark that this vision was outside Cornelius; he saw the angel outside himself, fastened his eyes upon him. This point makes a difference between this and somewhat similar appearances.

vv. 5—8. "And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."

He did not send his servants on messages they knew not for what, but told them all.

v. 9. "Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour."

"Drew nigh unto the city"—going down the coast from Caesarea on the north, to Joppa on the south.

"The housetop"—the housetops are flat in Palestine, and this would be a common place for anyone to retire to who wanted quiet.

"The sixth hour"—probably about twelve o'clock, but the Jews had two ways of reckoning time; the Roman day began in the morning, the Eastern day at six in the evening

v. 10. "And he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance."

Probably this was a fast-day; on Tuesdays and Thursdays the Jews fasted. "He fell into a trance," or "became in an

ecstasy." This vision was seen within, in an ecstasy, out of himself; so Balaam speaks of the man in an ecstasy, out of himself, "falling into a trance, yet having his eyes open[1]." To an onlooker he would have been like a man in a faint, but meantime he was conscious, he saw.

vv. 11, 12. "And he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven."

Those which, according to the Jewish ritual, were clean and unclean, all mingled together.

vv. 13—15. "And there came a Voice unto him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a Voice *came* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."

'God hath put together clean and unclean, sent them to you, bidden you eat.'

vv. 16—24. "And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven. Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them. And Peter went down to the men,"—went down by the outside staircase from the roof into the court below—"and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee. So he called

[1] Nu. xxiv. 4, but R.V. "falling down, and having his eyes open."

them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the morrow they entered into Caesarea."

Luke at Cæsarea. Philip had been at Cæsarea.

You remember that Philip, who preached in the lower and middle parts of Palestine, lived at Caesarea. After he had preached at Samaria and baptized the eunuch he was found living at Caesarea. So it was probably from Philip that Cornelius had heard of Christ. S. Luke writes of S. Paul's being at Caesarea after this, with Philip; and S. Luke himself was with Paul there as we see from his use of 'we'; so that it was probably at Caesarea that S. Luke learnt this about Cornelius[1]. It is important that we should consider how a writer came by his knowledge.

He was "cumbered with much serving." Surely he did not let the spiritual life suffer.

Was not this man, Cornelius, a man with a great many difficulties in his life? Think of his name; *Cornelius* probably implies that he was connected with a great old family in Rome; very likely he was not a near relation, for all who were in any way connected with a family preserved the family name. He commanded 100 men, and you can imagine what that implied in an Eastern town at that time. He must have had a large household, for he could spare two of his household, and an orderly to go on this message. Then he was living in his household on such terms with his servants that he could tell them of the things that concerned his religion. He was a man well known at Joppa, for his servants speak of him as "well reported of by all the nation of the Jews." Was there any man more cumbered with things of this world than a man in a garrison town like this? but this man asserted his right to live purely and holily. With all these pagan, worldly, sensual associations around him he insisted on having time to himself: at the time of the afternoon service at Jerusalem when the sacrifice was offered on God's altar it was something to him to retire by himself and pray. You know the kind of associations that would surround him, and you see him here having time to himself, not ashamed of

Difficulties with cohort, with household, overcome.

Asserted his right "to be religious," insisted on time to himself.

Hour of afternoon service in Temple.

[1] Ch. xxi. 8. Cf. pp. 279, 521.

Thus a *world-figure* —worldly position.

Religious position; he had moved; Heathenism, Judaism; inquires still.

letting his servants know that he went to pray; he had in fact many of the same difficulties that now beset a woman in the world. Realise again his religious position, how he had progressed. He had been first a pagan, then became a Jew, so far as he was allowed to be one—that is the meaning of "devout," εὐσεβής: but not content with the externals of life that he had reached to, he was an inquirer after something more deep, some inner thing. This man was born among the ideas of the Romans, who were pagans: then from these pagan ideas he had come to know the higher meanings of Judaism, and read the prophecies; then he had heard rumours of such a person as the prophets told of, put to death; and he was eager to go on whither God was calling him.

Do you know the story of Justin Martyr which Trench versifies? There is a scene in which Justin Martyr describes himself as having tried one form of religion after another, trying to get nearer to God, feeling as if he was getting further and further off.

> "I wandered forth upon the shore,
> Wishing this lie of life was o'er;
> What was beyond I could not guess,
> I thought it might be quietness,
> And now I had no dream of bliss,
> No thought, no other hope but this—
> To be at rest;—for all that fed
> The dream of my proud youth had fled,
> My dream of youth that I would be,
> Happy and glorious, wise and free,
> In mine own right, and keep my state,
> And would repel the heavy weight,
> The load that crushed unto the ground
> The servile multitude around."

The pressure of society was upon him, he failed, society spoiled him.

> "The purpose of my life had failed."

He could not make it out, he could not understand what the sea and the stars meant if he was to live such a poor life as he was living.

"The heavenly heights I would have scaled
Seemed more than ever out of sight,
Further beyond my feeble flight.
The beauty of the universe
Was lying on me like a curse;
Only the lone surge at my feet
Uttered a soothing murmur sweet,
As every broken weary wave
Sunk gently to a quiet grave,
Dying on the bosom of the sea:
And death grew beautiful to me."

Prayers and Alms of Heathen God-seekers.

But what was man before God—so full of trouble, wanting rest, longing for rest, wanting reality in life, feeling as if his own body and mind were keeping him away from God, as if the leaves of the trees, the waves, had more of God in them than he, as if his very aspiration made it impossible to reach God?

What does the angel say to Cornelius? "Thy prayer is heard and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God."

εἰς μνημόσυνον. Liturgic word.

The word "memorial" is used in Leviticus again and again; it is the word used for effectiveness before God of all the Jewish sacrifices. The priest for instance is to make a *memorial* before God with fine flour, oil, and frankincense[1]. This man Cornelius had made his way into Judaism; now he was making his way into the inner heart of Judaism, making an acceptable sacrifice, as acceptable as the sacrifice in the temple for the whole people. We need not question within ourselves about God's love for the heathen when we see a man thus reaching out to the light; he had that light which S. John speaks of when he says it "lighteth every man that cometh into the world[2]"; yet though he was feeling after this he did not know that that light was Jesus Christ. You remember that difficult passage in S. John's Gospel, "he that believeth not is condemned already[3]." Do we think that Christ means to say that a man who did not believe when he had no chance of doing so is condemned? From this story we see in a moment that what S. John means is that the man who sees

Reaching on to that Light (not yet identified with Christ) and through Him.

[1] Lev. ii. 2 ff. [2] Jo. i. 9. [3] Jo. iii. 18. R.V. "hath been judged."

Jesus, and refuses Him, who puts away the natural light, is judged; but the man who like Cornelius believes in the light as fast and as far as he can is a believer in Christ already. As for the man who, however he is placed, has had "the light that lighteth every man coming into the world," if he loves the light, if he wishes the light to shine in him, then he believes in Christ, and there is nothing to do but to tell him the name of Him in whom he believes; to tell him that the light is Christ. That is the position in which Cornelius stood; there was nothing wanting but that his joy should be made full by someone coming and telling him Who the Light was.

It is as well to speak here of one of the Articles of Religion, the 13th article, which has been sadly misconstrued. Men have taken hold of these holy words and wrested them; have said that Hindoo and Chinese do not do the works of grace, for they have not the grace of Christ; and that therefore their mind and heart are not pleasant to Christ, and that the article declares that their good works have the nature of sin. Some take the Calvinistic line and say without compunction that all such are lost, while others point the finger and say "See what you believe."

But that is not the meaning of the article: what it means to tell us is that lives lived in a way pleasant to Christ, according to the light, and longing for more light *are* lived by the grace of Christ.

S. Paul speaks of those who, not having the law, are a law unto themselves[1]; and says that God will render to them "that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek[2]."

So then we have in Cornelius a man who had been making

[1] Ro. ii. 14. [2] Ro. ii. 6—10.

the best of the light he had, and was only wanting to be led to identify the light with Christ.

Let us turn our thoughts from ourselves and ask whether or no those great nations of the East, so much greater than ourselves in many ways—the Indians with their wonderful books and arts, the Chinese with their practical philosophy of life, the Buddhists with their passion of self-denial—if they need that we should meddle with them? that we should teach them what we believe? Consider such a history as that of Justin Martyr and ask "are these hungering or not for what we can teach them?" Those who know them best say that they are; but if they are not they are not better off.

Do they need us to meddle with them? ask themselves.

Think of the Confucian philosophers holding forth in the finest way about the practical duties of life; it seems as if men who hold Confucianism must have wisdom so far as this world goes, and we must not depreciate the amount of wisdom it contains. But go to the house of a man who is a believer in this. On the door-posts you will find nailed up little talismans to keep the ghosts off. Does he not need that we should go and deliver him from the bondage which is death to his spirit? Or go to a Confucian temple; you will see noble precepts round the walls, then you will see a tablet which the priest hangs up, and round which the people crowd and you will read on it that prayers made in that place to the Venerable Fairy Fox will be surely answered.

And in India every day brings new society and new needs; you find an intellectual, brilliant people trying to get rid of what is false, and to piece together what they think must be true. One man knows 30 secret societies of Brahmins who are studying the Bible among the priests in the monasteries. He sends what answers he can to the questions they send him secretly; he has had as many as 20 questions sent him from such bodies—not from individuals merely—in one month. Have we, or have we not, a duty to these? Would it be a hard duty? What does Christ say of the Spirit within us? He says we may know whether we have the Spirit or not, because He will be in us a well of

Have you a duty to them? you, with water springing up.

water springing up unto everlasting life[1]. If the human soul which has this well does not care to make the Confucian or the Brahmin know more, does not care to help him to be wiser than he is, is the well springing up? If it is, it will make itself a channel; if it stops it is frozen; if it runs into the soul and there abides it is stagnant, it has ceased to be springing water.

What stays that? only freezing. What becomes of standing water?

We may test whether or no we have the Spirit by thinking whether or no this well is springing up in us, or whether it is stagnant. The world is crying for help, we must not stop our ears.

Peter—change of prejudice.

The use made of his thoughts. God's teaching always *à propos*.

The man who was sent to the hungry soul of Cornelius soon realised what he knew. We see that S. Peter was lodging with a tanner; thus giving up his prejudices. God does not send to him things which have no congruity with what he is doing. It is a fast-day and he is hungry, he falls into an ecstasy; it is natural that with the thought of food should come the thought of the restrictions as to things which he, as a Jew, might or might not eat, and the thought, "Are these things, these restrictions, really consistent with my life?" There, on the top of the house, he saw this vision, with the Mediterranean in sight which appeared to the Jews as the "way to the Gentiles," the way to the lands where Romans, Egyptians, all had their homes, beyond which were the glorious cities with their teeming millions, from which ships day after day brought men to see this strange Oriental people, just as Hadrian travelled through Egypt that he might make himself acquainted with its antiquities.

Trace the circumstances brought to bear on Peter there: the fast-day, his hunger, the restrictions about food, the thought of the great peoples beyond the sea, the nations.

'Ecstasy' (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 3); the Heathen's vision was openly.

Then came the ecstasy, and in the ecstasy came the Vision by wonderful channels which we know little of, for although God makes use of them sometimes, He entirely forbids us to use them for ourselves. Out of man's use of them grew necromancy and magic, and all superstitions;

[1] Jo. iv. 14.

but they have strange links with the unseen, and God can play upon these strands of nature as on the strings of a musical instrument. S. Paul speaks of the reality of such powers when he speaks with horror of those who 'intrude into those things which they have not seen[1].' Through these channels then, so acted on and so occupied, God pours in a strange parable. These things, clean and unclean mixed together, were so repugnant to S. Peter that, although he knew it was a heavenly Voice which said, "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat," he replied, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." Then the Voice goes on; wave after wave the truth comes, bursts out, "What God hath cleansed that call not thou unclean." Then the man who hears is ready to go to the Gentile, ready to go without taking any notice of the uncleanness, even into the Gentile home.

ὅραμα. There are channels which God uses, not to be forced by us.

When Peter woke he did not know what to make of the Vision; while he waited he tried to think what the vision meant. "He *doubted*," it says, "*in himself what the vision might mean*"; and again this is repeated in the 19th verse, "and while Peter *thought* on the vision."

Meditation on it as it passed—Voice of Spirit.

God does give us visions. He opens new things to us too, but it may be that the difference between S. Peter and us is that we do not think on the vision when it passes. God tenders things from above, we know the stirring of His Spirit, but do we rush to the world to rub out the impression of it, or do we, like S. Peter, meditate on it?

Meditate on our own Vision as It passes.

You have your part even in Visions.

The trial consists in this, that we are allowed just to be touched by the hand of God, and that then God leaves the rest to human action. Here the angel did not teach Cornelius, but gave him something to do—"Send for Peter."

Why did not the Angel teach Cornelius, or teach Paul without Ananias?

It made the whole difference to what came after, that Cornelius was willing to throw himself into it. So with S. Peter himself: would he go with the servants of the man

The coincidence: the asker, the teller, about God.

[1] Col. ii. 18, A.V., but R.V. gives "dwelling in the things which he hath seen." Cf. Lightfoot *in loc.* (*The Epistles of S. Paul, Colossians, and Philemon*), shewing the practical identity of the apparently contradictory readings.

who was taking such trouble to bring him? So again it was with S. Paul. S. Paul was not taught by Ananias, knowledge was not poured into his mind, but he had to take pains and trouble to put himself into a position to be taught the truth.

Everywhere Seeker and Teller of new-found truth.

Everywhere people are either in the position of seekers or tellers. If we are really fearing God we must be in both positions—seeking, for we do not know all yet, and have not reached our goal; and we must be ready to take the first indication of God's pleasure that we should tell someone something that we know.

XXIII.

22nd May, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts x. 23—29.

Cornelius.

Sincerity—the Inner Life.

The Life in the Thoughts the only substantial Life.
Matt. vi. 28.
(The under-current; the Deposit; the Formation.)

S. Peter. Permanence of his Character in the Gospels—Its working.

The light which we see to lie over the whole of the passage we shall read to-day is, the sincerity of these two men; the absolute, manly simplicity with which they talk. That must be the first attitude of those who speak to others or wish to be spoken to about religion; nothing can penetrate the shield of insincerity. Our nature is so composite that we have to hold many conversations with ourselves before we know if we are sincere.

Supposing we had some important, delicate transaction, and an agent was sent with whom we were to speak about it, we should feel as if we must have some talk with him about some other things first; we should feel that if we trusted him with the important matter at once, and he were unworthy, we should lose all. Just so it is right to have such conversations with ourselves. Sometimes we feel drawn towards all high things, and at other times our tone of mind seems for days one of worldliness and ambition. We seem thus to spend days below the surface and then to come up and scarcely know who we are, but we know we cannot look upon the

past worldliness and ambition as a dream. For it was *I* who felt all this, *I*, who in other moods, am unable to think without emotion of Him who hangs on the Cross. We can only come to the knowledge of what we are by watching ourselves as we should watch the face, tone, manner of someone who came about something which was all in all to us, and we did not know if he could be trusted.

It is a fortnight since we met here. What a number of persons we have seen since then, what a number of interesting things have been absorbing us, what a number have been going on in which we did not take interest, and we are now sorry for it. How have we passed through all this? Not perhaps without some misgivings as to whether the life we are leading is at all like life. When we have looked on others who are dear to us, in whom we take a friendly interest, a deep interest, we cannot help being anxious, if we look beyond the present, about the life they are leading. For what is living? There is a dreadful passage in the sixth chapter of S. Matthew where our Lord is speaking about one most terrible sin; He says the sin may be and is committed without any *act* at all; it is one of the commandments on which society rests, and He says that the commandment is not meant, and could not be meant, to refer to outward acts only.

The Inner Life is the only Life.

Are we not sometimes in a confusion on such points? The outward acts, the things I do, are those myself? Can I consider myself as possessing a mind whose thoughts I ought indeed to control, but which I can at any rate hide, so that no one should know them? Can I consider myself as a living being, and my mind as only one department of my life in which I am bound no doubt to exercise a certain rule; but such that if I do not control it I can repent, and feel that no harm has been done to anyone?

This theory is absolutely false, absolutely ruinous to any true life of the soul. The being which lives is that which we look on as if it was only a small part of ourselves. The mind and thought which I think to be only a district committed to me, *are* me, myself; there is no other self. My body, and

my brain, which exercises some control over my actions, are nothing but the instruments of the real being. If the instrument is put out of sight, killed, I am only then in the position of a person who cannot see without an eye-glass and who has broken the glass. I cannot do without my body in this world, but I am not going to live here always. When the instrument is broken *I* am the same, and I do not need the instrument any longer for I am going to live in a different region. That which I regard as a district of myself is the real being, sometimes light, sometimes religious, sometimes worldly; that is I myself; but the sad thing is that I should be sometimes one thing, sometimes another.

What I do with the instrument is not indifferent; I am responsible for that, but I am responsible for so much more. I cannot say that it doesn't matter what the body does, that I can let that do what it likes, and keep the soul pure. Some people have formed their life on that theory, but it is not a misconception which is likely to affect English people. But English people, with their eager, energetic characters, are much in danger of that other illusion,—of thinking that their life consists in that which can be written in a book, like the record of a voyage, or of astronomical observations. But the sixth chapter of S. Matthew reminds us of this, that the being which has to be sincere, which knows God, is not in this world. We do not know where it is, but we know that when the instrument is taken away it is just as real. When a man goes mad the instrument is wrong; when he is asleep, in a faint, in a trance, the instrument is put away. In a trance I may see mysterious things, as S. Peter did, because I myself may return to the region to which I properly belong.

That is the being about which I must inquire whether it is sincere; it speaks of God, it says, "Come, thou Holy Spirit, come," it calls the Spirit "sweet refreshment," it says, "from thy celestial throne shed a ray of light divine[1]"; it says these things without scruple in church, then outside church engages in indiscreet conversation.

[1] The hymn "Come, thou Holy Spirit, come," was almost invariably sung before the Addresses.

There was a word in that paper which ladies wrote for ladies some time ago, a word which I do not feel I really understand, a quiet hint not to be coarse. It is a serious blow when one first realises that this is possible, that the warning is needed, but needed it was, as those who know judge. I pray God that the word may have done its work. One of the greatest nations of the present time is running a fearful risk by its novels and by its theatrical spectacles, of suggesting to the pure young spirits whom they bring to gaze on them, all the evil that lies beneath their fashions and conversation. Undoubtedly this is one great temptation among the French.

There is not one of us who does not utterly lament the evil in the lives of many who might be the grandest models; but it is not only those who exhibit it who are to blame. These may go further and be worse than the rest, but they are after all the outcome of the whole tone and feeling of society. If society tolerates much that is evil there are spirits who will always go further, especially if they can do so in secret. If the tone of society is high, clear and decided, these will not wish to depart from it; the responsibility does rest on society of what its worst sinners shall be. The only way in which the tone of society can be strong and true, is by sincerity in the people that compose it; and sincerity in the people that compose it depends on whether they take a true view of themselves or not, whether they fancy that life consists merely in outward actions, or whether they know that life is action through an instrument, of a being higher and loftier than the instrument through which it acts. That is our conception of spirit. We each have a spirit, *how* we do not know, but we know that it may be worthy to dwell with God for ever. It is endowed with extraordinary powers, with intellect, with laughter—no creature but man laughs. This creature, which is one's self, has a wonderful range of being; all other things are but its instruments, and its action in this world is through instruments. As it is itself before God, so the thoughts which it thinks are its real life, the intellectual and moral action of the spirit.

It must not then be a mere hasty question in self-examination, "Have I kept my *thoughts* as they should be?" but it is the first question,—"Is my spirit moving in glory and beauty?" If I keep that sincere I shall have infinitely less difficulty in the guidance of the instrument. It is not only that the life of the spirit is before God, but all pure spirits are able to move in and out among us, angelic messengers sent to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation, able to see our spirits thinking and feeling; they cannot concentrate anxiety on the hand and eye which offend, for those must be governed by the thoughts of the heart. We should seek inspiration of the thoughts of the heart, in which our real life is—as we pray in the Collect before the Communion Service, "O God, unto whom all hearts be open...cleanse the thoughts of our hearts ...that we may...worthily magnify thy holy Name." We pray that we may be perfectly sincere. It is this inner life by which the spirit must be built up, yet I am almost afraid of using the words "inner life," for there is no outer life before God, the inner life is the only one.

Life of few perfected by great actions. Indeed the Life of all, even those few, consists only in the right managing of the small ones—in these discipline consists—on these depends how the great ones will be done.

The Spirit's life, —the life about which pure spirits are not deceived. Actions to them only a transparent veil.

Think of the sea: there is nothing but agitation on the surface, and where the waves break on the shore; but down below where the currents are often in contradiction to the movement above, in the sunless depth of the ocean, there is the deposit being made of the continents for ages to come. So the real man or woman, which is to live before God for ever, is not that which is being fashioned by intercourse with the world, but that which lives in the spirit and thoughts.

The undercurrent is the real movement of the sea on the shore. The Deposit.

vv. 23—26. "And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the morrow they entered into Caesarea, and Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

Turn again and look at these men. Here is Peter; how completely he is the same Peter that we read of in the

Peter, the genuine man of the Gospels.

Gospels. What he says, though so lightly touched, bears in it the proof of its authenticity. When he sees the vision he utters, as a dauntless strong man, what he thinks at the moment to be the truth, without sufficient consideration. It does not seem to matter who tells him a thing; if he disagrees with even heavenly authority, he must say what he thinks, even if it be the authority of his Master whom he loved and venerated. He dares to say to Christ after he has so fallen as to deny Him, "Thou knowest that I love thee[1]"; he is so excited by the glory of the transfiguration that he does not know what he is saying, and exclaims[2], 'It is good for us to be here...let us build three tabernacles.' When Christ took the opportunity of saying for the first time, "I go up to Jerusalem and shall be put to death," S. Peter's instant reply was, "Be it far from thee, Lord[3]." He is certain that Christ is divine, and it was not in him to be silent, as some of us would be whatever we might think. Then he received the most fearful rebuke, for Christ told him that he was speaking in the very spirit of Satan, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He acts in the same way here; he did not doubt a moment that it was a divine Voice he heard saying, "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat," but he replies nevertheless, "Not so, Lord." Then he repented in a moment. Is not this exactly the same man, as vehement in his repentance as in his positiveness, and so perfectly sincere? He knows he is the man the messengers want, he goes down to the three men and says, 'I am the man." He does not ask what he is wanted for; the first thing he says is, "I am he." So too when he goes with them into the presence of Cornelius he says, 'I also am a human being.' Scarcely anyone but Peter would express himself in that manner, but it went to the root of the unbounded veneration of Cornelius. It is not strange that Cornelius, having been a heathen, should be so ready to worship what is not God, that he falls down at Peter's feet; for to the heathen every tree and field was presided over by a deity, and Cornelius was still a Roman although he had now come to know the Jewish

Naïve—he knows he is the man they want, before he knows *why* they want him—ready, like the net.

Adoration. "I also am a human being." Human nature so likely to express itself and then be

[1] Jo. xxi. 15. [2] Matt. xvii. 4. [3] Matt. xvi. 22.

worship. But S. Peter in an instant spoke to him, "Stand up; I also am a man." All the features of his character that we have found in the Gospels are brought out here by a different author in a way which would anywhere, but in the region of religion, carry conviction of the authenticity of the writings to anyone.

reacted on by its own expression, it was necessary to check this at once.[1]

vv. 27—29. "And as he talked with him he went in, and findeth many come together: and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common or unclean: wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me?"

Another touch: "Unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common or unclean." One cannot love a characteristic of this kind: it is fine, strong, powerful, but not tender. He does not go half-way to meet any prejudices. 'I belong to a pure nation, I am not allowed to associate with the Gentiles, but *unto me hath God shewed* that I should not call any man common or unclean.' This is as much as to say 'it took God's shewing to make me come.'

Peter seen gaining new ideas, "And to *me God* shewed," 'It took all that to convince *me*.'

Then we see the train of thought in his mind, although it is not told; and here is another touch of truth in the narrative. We have had no explanation of the vision, but we see the result of it, the step forward in his thought. The plain meaning of the vision is to put an end to the Jewish regulations about food, but Peter has gone beyond that and says to Cornelius, "God hath shewed me that I should call *no man* common or unclean." He has grasped the point that the vision is not only to tell him that the Levitical distinction of meat is at an end but that the wall is thrown down between the nations. Peter had thought it out after being "much perplexed"; and he saw that he might know from the vision that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was also done away. Try to cast yourselves back into the feeling of a man who had all his

The vision evidently means no 'human being' is unclean.

[1] Cf. Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9.

life felt that he belonged to a holy nation, a peculiar people; to whom the oracles were made known and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came[1], and to whom the sudden change came about, when he was made to know that there was no difference between any human being and that nation.

Next time we shall see the same genuineness in Cornelius, and we will try to bring home to ourselves the deep sincerity of his character, and to see from these two men how we can each of us take care of our real self, life and thought, and keep it as clear and unpolluted as theirs.

[1] Ro. iii. 2, ix. 5.

XXIV.

5th June, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts x. 30—34.

Cornelius.

The Simplicity of his Venture.

Christ present and speaking. Then the Voice of the Spirit.

The glowing-out of the latent doctrine:

"In every nation," Hosea i. 10, ii. 23; Joel ii. 32; Isai. lxv. 1; Deut. xxxii. 21; as pointed out by S. Paul, Rom. ix. x.

In Deut. x. 17, S. Peter grasps the principle,

viz. that God's children were waiting everywhere for light, and are still, among the Heathen and among us—waiting for *us*, not for angels.

They that bring it them may have their own clouds: how these clear, under many influences, if only the Life of Thought is sincere.

God is "no Accepter of Persons." The Services which "Family" *must* render to Society, or perish. "Family" is on its Trial in England, as "the People" was in the old world.

We have been a long time over this passage because it is the very beginning of the Christian Church, the Christian Church of the Gentiles.

Cornelius, his ventures of faith—simplicity.

We should think of Cornelius as a man of great simplicity of character. We spoke of the difficulties in which he must have lived surrounded by temptations, evil habits, bad company; it was hard for such a man, a man of position in a responsible post, an important officer in a garrison town to

take a step like this. The chance of ridicule was nothing to him, but what ridicule there would have been if a single step had turned out to be a foolish one. He had seen an angel, he had heard him speak, and at once obeyed. Telling them what had happened, he sent an orderly and two or three servants all the way to Joppa to fetch from the tanner's house a man whom he did not know, whom he had never seen, to tell him the truth of God and everlasting life. It is done in such a soldierly way, so simply and straightforwardly. People were not in that particular generation more credulous than they are now. Cornelius was quite certain that S. Peter would come, he did not wait to see the result of his message, for when Peter arrived he had already invited a great number of friends and relations to await his arrival. He never stopped to think what his position among his friends would be if Peter did not come. When the poor fisherman in his simple dress came with the men whom Cornelius had sent for him he must have entered in a sort of daze; for he had been in a trance on the house-top, woke to find the messengers waiting down below for him, and had come at once. What a striking and interesting scene. If some great Chinaman or Brahmin now sends to hear about the things of God, he knows he is sending for a person of some importance; but here was a man of a great nation sending for a simple person. It was a great venture of faith; he was quite prepared to follow wherever God led him, to learn anything God should teach him and do what he should hear. What a happy state, to have the ear of the soul open to anything God will teach us by the hands of anyone, and be quite prepared to execute anything we are told.

He had mentioned seeing an angel to his servant.

He was quite sure they would come—had invited his drawing-room meeting.

He was quite sure it was his duty to follow God's teaching.

Not only Cornelius and Peter were actors in this scene, in this critical moment; we see our Lord Himself was there; if indeed we have borne in mind what the teaching of the Acts was—to shew those near to Christ that He was always ready to hear and speak to them. During the time that had passed between the Resurrection and Ascension Christ had shewn Himself ready to be present with His people, and we should expect to find Him present at such a time.

Christ must have had part in this great affair.

In the Vision S. Peter recognized his Lord's voice in a moment; his answer was, "Not so, Lord"; for he knew it was Christ's voice; he recognizes either the voice or the style and way of speaking: as S. John did when he saw the marvellous vision in the Isle of Patmos (Rev. i. 13). He saw one like to the Son of Man, "His head and His hair white as white wool, as snow, and His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like unto burnished brass...and His voice as a voice of many waters[1]." Yet John knew Him, the Son of Man, his friend and companion, with whom he had lived and talked. So S. Peter was speaking exactly as he was accustomed to speak to Christ. I think we can even recognize Christ's own style of speaking. He spoke generally in very short, brief, incisive sentences, which were often very puzzling to His hearers, meant to turn them upon themselves, to make them think.

Peter recognized His voice or style.

The style is like—very brief, very introverting, makes men think.

We know by interpretation and long thinking what many such short words of His mean, but how lost we should be if we heard these things for the first time. He said to His disciples when the hungry multitudes were standing round, "*Give ye them to eat*[2]." 'Feed five thousand people in the wilderness with the food provided for thirteen—five loaves and two small fishes.' Picture yourself hearing this for the first time; He left it to His followers to think out. Or again, if it had been your conviction from your youth that you might only eat certain things, and that others carried defilement, so that you took always with you in a basket whatever you would require that day, and kept it near you lest it should be touched by anything defiling, imagine hearing the Master say, "*Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth a man*[3]." It would be a revelation. Picture again the scene after the Last Supper[4] when our Lord girded Himself to wash His disciples' feet. S. Peter remonstrates, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet;' our Lord answered, "*If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me.*" Or another passage; "*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up*[5]," this temple made with so many hands, by

[1] Rev. i. 13—15. The translation is by the Archbishop in "*The Apocalypse.*"
[2] Matt. xiv. 16. [3] Matt. xv. 11. [4] Jo. xiii. 4.
[5] Jo. ii. 19.

so many people, in so many years. We know now that He described His Death and Resurrection, but imagine what they would feel who heard it first. Or take the scene when His disciples would defend Him from Judas; they had heard that He had come to bring peace, and He says, "*He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one*," and they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords," and He said, "*It is enough*[1]." Or imagine yourself just seated in the boat to cross the lake, suddenly remembering that no one had taken any bread; and He takes no notice of it, but says, "*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*[2]." You will see how very puzzling these words of our Lord were, never to be forgotten, to be written in the hearts of the hearers. So S. Peter recognizes who is bidding him eat the things which were monstrous for him even to touch as a Jew. Christ was present, an actor in this great scene. And then what more beautiful than to notice that Christ speaks and then is silent. Peter hears no more the voice of Christ, he says, 'There came a Voice to me,' this was repeated thrice, then Peter heard no more, but the Spirit spoke within. 'Immediately,' Peter says, 'there were three men, already come to the house while I was on the housetop, sent from Caesarea, and the Spirit bade me go with them.' That is really a step in the onward direction. First of all the Apostles heard Him when they saw Him, after a time they heard Him still when they saw Him not, and afterwards they were satisfied when He spoke only in their hearts. That is the point at which we now stand. We believe that Christ lived the life of man, that after He was gone away His voice was heard again and again, and that at last there was silence; now His Spirit speaks to us and we hear it. Does it not seem to be given to some happy people to have perhaps once in their lives heard something from without themselves, and then to go on led by the Voice within? This is not the experience of all, some go on in an even tenour all their lives. But let us not think it is a vain fancy when we hear a Voice in our hearts, that the

After that the voice of Christ is silent and the Spirit spoke within. And this is the preparation for us.

The glowing forth of the latent doctrine.

[1] Lu. xxii. 36—38.

[2] Matt. xvi. 5, 6.

Spirit is speaking within us, saying, 'This is right or wrong, that is strong or weak.' The Voice speaks to all saying, "This is the Way, walk ye in it."

I want you to notice how the latent doctrine awoke in S. Peter. Words that we have heard again and again are sometimes latent, but are as seeds sown in our hearts and we need not fear but that they will germinate. The sense of this message was in S. Peter, and when he was set in the right way, it suddenly glowed forth. Picture yourselves sitting in a room when twilight is closing in, watching the fading light, the room growing darker and darker, and suddenly without any movement on your part the electric wire glows with brightness, all is light round you and the whole room is changed. So here whatever was in Peter's heart and knowledge began to germinate now that Christ had spoken. He took the first step in the dark when he entered the house of Cornelius, then the truth began to glow within, and the words burst from his lips. Peter has told of his great difficulty in coming, and that he only did so because of the vision; but when Cornelius explains why he sent for him you see the change in the very first words he speaks.

vv. 30—33. "And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, 'Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea-side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord."

Now the full meaning of an old text, not understood before, glowed out into perfect brightness: "The Lord your God...the great God...which regardeth not persons..." (Deut. x. 17). Now Peter understood what Moses meant, he grasped the principle and the words burst forth.

v. 34. "And Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Of a truth

I perceive[1] that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him.'"

Deut. x. 17 receives new sense for Peter because he grasps the principle in it.

In the 9th and 10th chapters of the Epistles to the Romans you will see how S. Paul uses old words which the Jews had read over and over again without understanding their full meaning, and shews how they have glowed into life; expressions like the "potter's vessel." He reminds them of the thoughts of men who had died long ago and taught them of God. These words were embedded like fossils or like gems in the rock of the old law, and S. Paul with a single stroke of the pick brings them into light as he explains the passages and shews how the great power of God was at work. He tells the Jews that they have known from the very beginning that God would bring the Gentiles to the light, for Hosea (i. 10) speaking to Israel says that "in the place where it was said unto them [the Gentiles], Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God;" and again (Ho. ii. 23) it is written, "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God[2]." So here S. Peter catches the force of all these passages, and though the Jews had no belief whatever that the Gentiles would be brought to God and made His children, he shews them that it was said in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should fill up the number of God's children.

Again, S. Paul quotes the most difficult and obscure prophet Joel (ii. 32): "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved[3]." And we find S. Peter in his speech (Acts ii. 16—21) making use of this same prophecy, and quoting the whole passage (Joel ii. 28—32), "I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...;" saying that this was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

[1] He had 'caught' it, the very word *καταλαμβάνομαι*.
[2] Ro. ix. 25, 26. [3] Ro. x. 13.

Again, we read in Isaiah (lxv. 1), "I was found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my Name[1]." The Gentiles had never been called by His name in Isaiah's time, yet he had heard and recorded this message. Some of these passages are put together by S. Paul in his great argument Ro. ix. and x.

But the full meaning of such passages only now began to fructify in Peter's mind. S. Peter had besides heard the Son of God say that in the Last Judgment "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, and before Him shall be gathered *all the nations*," and that they should be judged by their works[2]. It had never struck him personally what our Lord meant when He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold [the fold of Israel], them also must I bring and they shall hear my voice[3]."

It was all there, Peter had heard it all,

It may be that some of you are anxious about your dear ones, but if you have done your duty, if you have planted the holy Word in their heart when young, do not be disquieted because it has not yet fructified; pray for them, do not think that the holy Word will be lost; the seed sown may tarry, but it will germinate and at last burst into life; do not mistrust or be disbelieving. See how the great Apostle had found on this day the truth of those things he had always known but which had hitherto borne no fruit at all. It is hard to carry ourselves back to the time when Christendom began, but it dates from that day when it first became clear to this man that God had His people everywhere, and is no 'respecter of persons.' We who are of this great city of London must be comforted when we read in the Acts, ch. xviii., how while S. Paul was sleeping the sleep of almost despair, doubting what he could preach to the 'earthen vessels,' as he calls them, he had a magnificent vision, the Lord Himself bid him not to be afraid to speak, "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." What was the city? Corinth, the city about which the heathen said themselves 'that it was a bad day

viz. that God has His people everywhere —waiting everywhere for light:

[1] Ro. x. 20. [2] Matt. xxv. 31, 32. [3] Jo. x. 16.

in profligate Corinth,

when a man went to Corinth.' They thought that he must be a very strong man who dared venture into so fascinating, ruinous, and seductive a city, so utterly overwhelming to a young man in its beauty and intellect and attraction, yet even there our Lord said, "I have much people." So it proved when the Corinthian Christians in a short time became a glorious Church. We are only wanting in faith. Christ's words to S. Paul are, 'Be not afraid to speak—hold not thy peace.' We do not require to hear God's voice speak, for He is speaking in our hearts, but let us be careful to do our part. Paul obeyed the voice and abode in Corinth a year and six months, teaching the word of God. Many of you are working for those whom God has already called; your work is to perfect their blessing, to make them feel that they do believe Christ, to make them take this belief to heart, to make it come out in their lives, to help them on from merely *knowing*, to understanding and walking in the truth: poor people often depend upon you, help them to bring forth this spirit of faith by kindness and by earnestness.

among the heathen, and among us. Waiting for *us*, not for angels to enlighten them.

Are you doing the same in your families, among your children, your relations; are you teaching and helping them; are you walking in sincerity, and using faithfulness in heart and speech? But God says He has people waiting everywhere for the light; the heathen are waiting for *us*, not for angels to enlighten them. The angel who appeared to Cornelius did nothing himself, nor the angel who came to Paul. S. Paul had to go where there were human beings to be taught and so must we also. Let none of us say, "There is no one waiting for me; no one wants what I can teach, and I am not quite clear in my own mind what I do believe." Was S. Peter clear in his mind? He had been in very great ignorance and darkness, but he simply felt he was called to go; he had by no means even arrived at the fact that Christ had the least intention of sending him to those who were not born children of Abraham. So let none of us say, "I am not clear." We must believe something; let us try to teach what we do believe. Neither Cornelius by himself nor S. Peter alone can represent exactly our state; Christians must be a

You do not perceive that a Christian

compound of both. You have difficulties and darknesses like both Cornelius and S. Peter. Darkness like Peter's knows something and it may know more; darkness like that of Cornelius is only waiting for light to burst upon it. If we feel by no means clear, it is only an indication we are in a state of progress; God's we are, and God's we shall be. All became clear to Peter in the middle of his work; and by his coming Cornelius was brought into the perfect light. Suddenly he grasped the idea that Christ was the Saviour of all men. We find it difficult to carry ourselves into the Jewish state of mind, into the darkness in which he was. Though he had lived and worked with Christ, he thought He was only to be the enlightenment of the children of Israel; now he knows that his Master is 'Salvator Mundi.'

may be like both Peter and Cornelius.

You have your own difficulties like Cornelius, and you must remember that Peter had too, and only grasped truth suddenly in the midst of work.

Your light is not bright, you say, but whatever it may be, let it shine before men; you have your own clouds, but out of clouds comes forth sometimes the brightest light. In the spiritual world there are cloudy times. Sometimes we see a cloud dissolving itself in tears far out at sea, where its waters seem lost; so sometimes our clouds are broken up into a great sorrow which seems to afflict us alone, but when the sorrow is past the daylight is shining in our hearts; sometimes the clouds are driven away by a strong gale, just so a wholesome conversation with a friend will disperse the cloud which hung over us for long. Sometimes God sees that we want sunshine and joy to disperse a cloud, and He sends His warm beams of joy and love; but at times He sees that brightness is not good for us, He sees that we want judgment; He sends the thunder-cloud, gathering black and heavy, and it breaks upon us, and with a crash and heavy storm it bursts upon us; but after it has passed away, all is clear. Or the cloud passes away by our own compassion and tenderness, and instead of the rain breaking over the sea, it falls on some dried field and refreshes it, and there is a "clear shining after rain."

Your own light may not be perfect; that is not to hinder your shewing what you have.

They who bring light have it often in cloud.

How the clouds clear away.

Sometimes in tears—a sorrow.

Sometimes a fresh gale—of a wholesome friend.

Sometimes by sunshine. God sees brightness good for us.

Sometimes with a crash. He sees a judgment good for us.

Sometimes by soft rain on dry ground. Compassion.

Let none of us be afraid of speaking or of doing good simply because our hearts are cloudy. Clouds will gather round all souls. It is God's way in us as in creation;

What is the course now for you and your clouds? That which was so blessed for Cornelius, φοβούμενος κ. ἐργαζόμενος—golden words.

and God disperses them in different ways as He sees best. We can be compassionate, watchful and faithful, and the cloud of intellectual doubt will come to nothing. The attitude of mind which we must keep is exactly described by two plain words: "I perceive that...in every nation he that *feareth God*, and *worketh righteousness*, is acceptable to Him." These two things are needed; they are holy, purifying, strong, and true; go on fearing and working and you will not be afraid with a worldly fear, nothing will go wrong. God will send the light; the old words will dawn upon you in a new light and you will understand. So Isaiah wrote it (l. 10), the most beautiful verse in literature. "Who is among you that *feareth* the Lord, that *obeyeth* the voice of His servant? he that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Perhaps this verse, touching the same points of fear and obedience had occurred to S. Peter. If you will trust in the name of the Lord, there is no reason to be really frightened or to look forward to death as a future terror. Though it is walking in darkness, yet whoso trusts on God will not be forgotten, and is not that exactly what we want?

Pray like Cornelius according to your light, and work; and He will send you light, a word:

Again, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, *vv.* 10, 11, we read: "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in darkness, and thine obscurity be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in dry places..." If you are a comforter and do your best to be kind, if you give what you have, there is an absolute promise from God that darkness shall not swallow you up, light shall rise in your darkness.

If your thoughts within are pure or sincere, or trying to be,

Go like Peter where you are sent. As you go a light breaks out over a thought of your own or a passage.

The first word I spoke, and the last I would urge on you, is to be sincere. If we look into our soul, we know we ought to be ashamed, how much more in the sight of God? Fling away all that is unworthy, dishonourable, not true, aim at simple sincerity. Go like S. Peter where you are sent, and the light will break out over you. Have you ever stood on the sea-shore when the sea has been so absolutely black and the sky so black that it all seemed one blackness, when it was impossible to see where the sea and sky join? Then you may

see sometimes a rift in a cloud open and one stray beam descend upon the sea and touch one single little portion of it into living light. If once that happens to us, and in sincerity and simplicity we know and feel and are afraid of our darkness, just let us do the one thing we know we ought to do, try to cure one bad habit, or the bad temper that is doing mischief, and the clouds will break, that bright ray of light will shine over our dark sea; and that light is God.

XXV.

June 26th, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts x. 34—48.

S. Peter and Cornelius.

S. Peter's speech—broken sentences. *Analysis.*

34. 'God no Accepter of Persons'—[Responsibility of 'The Family' now as of 'The People' then.]

35. What God accepts is 'Fear with Activity'—Anxious Reverence with Effort—neither without the other.

Fulness of Conviction not essential to this; comes with

36. "Peace," which is the 'Gift through Jesus Christ.'

37. The Foundation of the New Force in you is the Historic Gospel: Peter's first Teaching is in fact The Creed. [The first Thing to be taught:]

38. viz., 'After the Baptism of John, which could effect nothing,' came 'Unction of Jesus Christ in Spirit and Power: His beneficent Life of Deliverances' [*note* The true rationale of Miracles], "God with Him."

You will remember that we noticed last time how this expression 'God is no respecter of persons' had been often read yet almost unobserved in Deuteronomy; but the sight of all these Gentiles gathered together to hear the will of God makes all the difference to S. Peter's understanding, and the familiar words flash upon his mind in their true meaning. Notice the effect of S. Peter's emotion in these broken sentences, abrupt, disconnected, with sudden beginnings of a new thought; not one sentence is finished, but you

Peter's emotion—Broken sentences of exordium.

catch the meaning in a moment, for the order of thought is clear enough.

vv. 34, 35. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him. The word which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ,"—he cannot stop at the mention of Jesus Christ, but runs on, "He is Lord of all..." then he takes up his sentence again:

v. 37. "That saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." Then he goes on again with a new subject.

vv. 38, 39. "Even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him..." and again this sentence is not finished, for he goes on: "And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem...."

We are witnesses to the Historic Human Life.

There is no construction, no grammar in the sentences at all. Surely that proves the genuineness of the speech, the fidelity with which the words were reported; if anyone wished to write a sermon for S. Peter, he would have composed a finished and grammatical one. A new idea of the Church bursts upon S. Peter, an idea undreamt of before, combining all men in one as the new meaning comes home to him of the words, "God is no respecter of persons," Jew or Gentile, bond or free, are all accepted by Him; and S. Peter saw his Christ, the true God and Man, in every one of those present. Then he seems to grow calm and proceeds in an orderly manner to tell them the history of Christ. *vv.* 39, 40, "Whom also they (the Jews) slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest." Try to put yourselves back into this time and think what these new announcements were; it was the first time such things had been spoken in their ears at all; they knew Peter was the messenger of God, they had been divinely told he was. Think what it was to hear this man

quietly and unhesitatingly asserting that he had witnessed these things, that he had eaten and drunk with One Who had been dead and buried. *v.* 41, "Manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead:" to hear him say that this One was coming again to be the Judge, not only of the people there present, but of the dead of all past time. *v.* 42, "And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." And finally to hear him say that this awful Person was the same spoken of by prophet after prophet in the old rolls they possessed, and that every one that believed should have no conscience of sin, that all who were weighed down and miserable with this knowledge should by this Person be freed from that bondage. *v.* 43, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." We can scarcely wonder at what followed.

We are witnesses to the Real Resurrection Life.

The Prophets are witnesses.

vv. 44—46. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

Temporary Symbolic witness to Him. Speech of Praise.

v. 47. "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Mark the difference. These had received the Spirit first, and Peter is eager to complete the holy rite which Christ had ordered, and which they believed to be the entrance to the new covenant.

v. 48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." At their entreaty, as we gather, he remained with them for a while.

We have seen S. Peter's emotion clearly in the broken sentences of the exordium, let us now exactly notice the whole position.

Analysis. "God no Accepter of Persons."

Go back for a moment to *v.* 34. 'No respecter of persons,' or in one word 'person-accepter'; there is a revelation in that word. At that very moment S. Peter was doing what Christ had said he would do, he was laying the foundation of the Church which we now are; old things were passing away, all things were becoming new, the old laws, the old rites, the chosen People, the Priesthood, the exclusive title to the Holy Land and possession of the Sanctuary, the exclusive right to the Altar—the old Covenant was passing away.

That moment the Kingdom, the Priesthood, the Prophetic office, the Peace, the Security, all the Dignity, Sacredness, and Trustedness of "the People" was passing away.

When Christ died the veil was rent, and now was beginning the coming in of a new Kingdom and the putting away of the old. The peace and security which had been covenanted to the old nation were broken up. They had been trusted to be the keepers, as S. Paul says, of the divine oracles[1]. They had had privileges of a people sacred, royal, chosen;—these were theirs no more, and why? They had despised God's warnings, broken His Laws, so He cast them away; His chosen people are rejected, and the Gentiles are admitted to the Covenant. Apply this to our own case.

The old Acceptance was over: because they failed in their Royal, Sacred Honour.

Our own nation has the peculiar institution of its aristocracy. The castle stands on the hill, the village looks up to the old house.

"The family" is what every village speaks of; "the family" is what all who belong to it consider to be their title to honour, to lands and standing; they prize the purity of their family and the rightness of their descent; and this nation particularly has kept and intends to keep special families at the head of its society. Surely the reason for this is that "the family" is the very centre of England's pride and honour. "The family" is the foundation of all society and the purity of it is committed specially to the guardianship of certain families which are marked; the nation trusts them so plainly. The purity of the English family is the most sacred idea which belongs to the character of this nation.

One nation has its accepted Families. Their title to Honour, Land, Status is the purity of their Family.

Their main use is the Guardianship of "the Family" which is the central idea of the character of this nation.

For some time past many people have spoken and we have been shocked at hearing how the family life is being

[1] Ro. iii. 2.

America, the Colonies, have no such guardians of that Institution—no guardians—no citadel of the Family.

broken down in America and the colonies where there are no appointed special guardians of the sacredness of the family; where divorce and remarriage are lightly allowed, and from these countries we are continually receiving letters and papers shewing that many are almost in despair of a better feeling coming back to their people. Even now Bills are being introduced in the colonies which will utterly destroy the purity of the family and of family life. The family is not an indefinite thing. The 18th chapter of Leviticus (which should be read and studied by all) gives a clear description of the family, complete, inviolate, as it may meet around one hearth. It is essentially the idea of a true nation that this family bond should be complete and inviolate. And the very meaning of the family implies the prohibition of intermarriage between its members. Look carefully through this chapter and you will find enumerated those who are bound together and may not marry each other; and that has been the law of the Christian Church from the very beginning.

They are falling into utter reproach for the transgression of the Family purity.

Lev. xviii. is the Definition of the Family, which was essential to a true nation.

Are our "Families" keeping their place as Guardians of the Institution by mere character of their own title?

They will perish from England if they violate their charge, either by (1) moral impurity, or (2) change of marriage laws.

But let me finally ask you a question. Do you think in your hearts that the families which are at the head of society for this special purpose of preserving the purity of the family are doing their duty as guardians of England's honour? To all appearance—yes,—but they are failing in that duty and unfaithful to the charge if they allow among themselves moral impurity. They cannot, either men or women, expect that they will be continued to fill the place which they have filled in England till now, if this should happen, or if by their instrumentality change is made in the marriage laws, if the old divine account of what the family should be is broken in upon, and violated. Do not think you are doing your duty by mere passive continuance of what has been, but by praying for your sons and daughters, who look to you with such love and affection, training them as they grow up, to keep that perfect purity of tone in their whole life and thought; and by your example preventing any change of feeling as they grow beyond your care. There is nothing more beautiful than this law of perfect purity, nothing more terrible than its violation. What will happen if the guardians

of these things are unfaithful? It cannot be worse, but it must be as bad as if there were unfaithful clergy.

We have seen how their royalty, their priesthood, their honour were taken from the Jews; so will all privilege be taken from classes which are unfaithful to the charge for which God has specially ordained them. God is no "respecter of persons." May He grant that these privileges may not be taken from us for our unfaithfulness.

If they fail let them know that God is no 'accepter of persons.'

What does God accept? Not persons. He is not bound by any amount of promises which He has made to people upon conditions, if they break those conditions. But what manner of person is acceptable in His sight? "He that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness." Fear with activity—holy fear with holy activity, or in more modern phrase—"anxious reverence with effort." Nor merely the well-taught and well-reared mind, but the mind which tries to be reverent and combines with it the effort of activity for good. You may say, "But I find it so difficult to be reverent and active in the sense you mean, because my convictions of religion are not really very strong." One may grieve over this but the *feelings* of conviction are not essential to this reverence and activity. If only you go on in dimness and difficulty, fearing and working, reverencing and being active, up to the fulness of your conviction, reverence will grow and one day He will give you perfect peace with Himself.

What God does accept is "Fear with Activity."

Fulness of conviction is not essential to this, but comes along with "Peace," which is God's "gift through Jesus Christ."

In order to see the beauty of these qualities think of the opposite of them—to be mocking and idle. To be mocking is a fearful thing; to keep on shivering for fear of what may come; all the time scoffing at the idea of a life to come and yet having horrible misgivings that it may be true. And it is a fearful thing to be idle; to see people doing good and to take no part in it yourself; not even to help them, much less to do anything of your own. It is possible to be both mocking and idle, the combination does exist, and yet it is a more common thing to be irreverent and yet to do a certain amount of good works; to be irreligious, unholy, yourselves and yet to provide for the poor and sick; to be kind and helpful and yet to be irreverent in the inner spirit. What a terrible

Do not be (1) mocking and idle—few are so bad as that—

or (2) mocking and active,

thing it is to let the ears hear and the tongue speak irreverent, irreligious, unholy, risky things in the evening, and next morning to be making arrangements for your servants going to church, to be "working for the poor." Again, it is a fearful thing to believe, to be reverent and yet to be idle, to be craving and perhaps praying for more peace with God and yet to make anything an excuse for want of effort. To be saying to ourselves, "I must live up to my belief, I must get more consistent in my life with what I believe to be true, for on the whole I do believe it; those whom I love best and honour most do this, and my desire is to live as they live, and to die as they die," and all the while to be excusing oneself for want of effort; to be making the wishes of relations, of husbands or brothers an excuse. Or again some say, "I cannot dare to live up to what I believe of God and Christ because I know I should break down and be worse than before, I am afraid of being inconsistent;" or again, "I have tried and failed and cannot try again;" or, "when I tried before I kept on for two or three weeks and then a greater crash came, so I settled to put less strain on myself and not to try so hard; some people are amiable by nature, it is easy to them but not to me." To say this is to throw over the inner yoke. Those who say so begin to think there is so much effort and constraint bound up with it, that it becomes an excuse for not living up to their belief. These people are ever looking for a good opportunity in London or in the country, they say "It is so very hard to make a start;" and they trifle opportunities away. Such characters never take a true tone, they are always limp, soft and foolish. The world points the finger at the utterly mocking and idle person, though it is not uncommon to be irreverent and yet active. But S. Peter says the person whom God will accept is the person who will endeavour to be *both* "fearing and working righteousness;" *both* reverent and active; he will try to be holy and yet anxious to work. Having freed himself from the thought that salvation was only for the Jews, he sees that reverence and eagerness to do good is what God will accept in any man; Cornelius, his man-servant,

or (3) reverent and idle.

and his faithful orderly with their high ideal of righteousness are a revelation to S. Peter. S. Peter goes on to tell them of a new force that had come into the world, which is there now, and can work in all, because God is ready to breathe that force into every heart and soul. What is this new force? "The Holy Ghost fell on them." And the foundation of this new force is in the life and death of Jesus Christ. The first thing that Peter tells them is about "Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Why? "For God was with Him" (*v.* 38). S. Peter then capitulates the history of Christ; He was slain, hanged on the tree, raised up the third day, manifest, not to all, but to the chosen few, ordained Judge of quick and dead; bringing through His Name the forgiveness of sins. Is this not the Creed? They believed already in the first articles of the Creed, in God the Father Almighty; he tells them of the articles concerning Jesus Christ[1]; and now the last articles of the Creed were being acted before their eyes. Peter believed that a certain gift was given by the hands of the Apostles alone. But now the Holy Ghost fell upon those that were baptized and thus was acted the rest of the Creed.

The foundation of the New Force is and must be the Historic Gospel.

Peter's first teaching is in fact the Creed.

First Peter spoke to them of the gift, then the reality followed. This is what we mean when we say we will have religious instruction for our schools. You may teach the children morality, but you will not by that make them moral. Look back on past history, and the schools of antient learning; the old world tried to make people moral, but all the schools of philosophers did no good, and we see how the antient cities—cities nobler than we can boast of, as Rome, Carthage, and Athens, the seat of all history and art—how these fell in their turn, and sank deeper and deeper into immorality and vice till there was not a defilement which was not common almost to every being in those great cities. We see that S. Peter declares that the foundation of this new force by which men can live moral lives unto God must

It is for ever the First Thing to be taught.

[1] "Conceived of the Holy Ghost," cf. "anointed with the Holy Ghost" (*v.* 38).

rest upon the Creed, upon the Life of Jesus Christ, Christ crucified, Christ risen. When we say that England will come to an end unless we have religious instruction in our schools, we are only trying to do what S. Peter was doing for Cornelius that day. Cornelius had been making all the effort that he could; he and his people were praying at the hour when the sacrifice was being made in Jerusalem; they were doing their best in darkness, when S. Peter came to tell them how to bring this new force into their lives, and he could only do it by telling them of Jesus Christ. And he shews them how the baptism of Christ was different from the baptism preached by John the Baptist, who himself had said, 'I gather you together to make you hope for better things, but my baptism is nothing in itself; I baptize with water, but there cometh one after me who shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' This is the new power; and after that baptism to which John looked forward, came the gift of the Holy Ghost. I want again to call attention to what is here said of miracles. He "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (*v.* 38). Why did Christ all these things? that He might prove His power, that He might prove He was the Son of God, or in order to give evidence of the Christian religion? No. Every step He took brought deliverance to some one; because, being what He was—God in man, both God and man—He could not help doing good; being the First Begotten of all, the Healer, the Christ, the abolisher of sin and of all suffering and misery, and all that comes from sin, sin and sorrow and even death disappeared in His presence, "for God was with Him." Where He was, God was. There lies our divine hope, "God in us"; we must make men believe, we must bring all the world to God. They must first be touched; their hearts kept from the evil of this world; then will follow that state in which God will wipe away tears from all eyes, for sorrow and sighing will have fled away for ever.

After the Baptism of S. John which could effect nothing, came "Unction of Jesus Christ in Spirit and Power."

His beneficent Life of Deliverances "God with Him."

XXVI.

July 10th, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts xi.

Companions in Life, in Life after Death, Prophets, Recipients—all *Witness*.

The Church, and the Child of the Church, cannot avoid that duty of *Witness*.

xi. 2. The Supreme and Infallible interfere—*but* there are always *two* claimants of that character. S. Peter meets these by History.

The narrative, why *double*? Personal vividness of Peter's.

17. The Doctrine—Recognition of spirit outside organization—Organization not to be violated, but to follow facts.

19–27. The flux, reflux and advance of the Church in the Greek world—Opening for Saul.

'The Lord' believed in from the first moment, not 'The Teacher' merely.

The Antiochene soubriquet 'Christian' will be a reproachful name again.

18. But what was the Real Gift? 'Repentance unto Life.'

The Death-in-Life of many lives—The half death of 'Indifference': Its view of itself—The extreme difficulty of the only remedy—Can be applied only by honest Witnessing.

In the last few verses of the xth chapter there are four remarkable points which, as they belong to the beginning of Christianity, must belong to us if we are Christians in

the same sense as the first Christians. We began this year with the endeavour to think how great a burden was on everyone of witnessing, and we feel it impossible that anyone should be a Christian according to the antient, apostolic idea of Christianity if he would not bear witness. Notice how this is confirmed in these few verses of S. Peter's speech; he tells how the companions of Christ witness to the life of Christ, to His human life as a historical fact. From the 39th verse to the 41st he narrates the death and resurrection of Christ. In the 42nd and 43rd verses he tells His power as Judge of quick and dead, and the Remitter of sins. Surely each one of you is 'a witness chosen before of God.' This duty has been laid upon you by God, if you believe in Him, hope in Him and love Him. He has chosen you as witnesses, believers in His Resurrection Life; you are even now witnessing for Him. You must not think S. Peter means that only the companions of Christ are to bear witness, for in *v.* 43 he adds that "all the prophets" bear witness. And the very moment he said this, the Holy Ghost fell upon these Gentiles, and they spake with tongues (*v.* 46). Let us note here that "tongues" does not mean foreign tongues only, but that they were speaking above their ordinary wont, for they broke out into praise, magnifying God and uttering their conviction. The one point for us to notice is that the early Christians at once witness. What they believed they spoke, as David said, and S. Paul repeated, "I believed, and therefore did I speak[2]." Our very nature comes out when we believe; and if we believe, can we resist the duty of speaking and making others partakers of the inestimable blessing which we have? Can we believe and yet keep this treasure to ourselves? Can Church people according to the definition of the Apostles, nurse their own convictions in their own bosoms? Can they be really followers of Christ if they do? We have often spoken of the difficulty of witnessing, but there is not one here who could not overcome the difficulty, if she thought it really necessary.

We see (*v.* 39) Companions witnessing to the Historic Human Life,

(*v.* 41) Companions witnessing to the Real Resurrection Life,

(*v.* 43) Prophets witnessing to Its Result in Remission of Sins[1],

(*vv.* 44, 46) Recipients witnessing to their own conviction.

Church built on these witnessings.

Can we resist the conviction that witnessing is a Law of Life in Christ? Can Church people escape it?

[1] Ps. cxxx., Jer. xxxi. 34; Mal. iii. 3.

[2] Ps. cxvi. 10, R.V. "I believe, for I will speak"; 2 Cor. iv. 13.

xi. 1—3. "Now the Apostles and the brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

The Supreme Infallible Folks take to task. A papacy is begun.

Observe how at the very moment Christianity began to be a reality, it began to meet with contradictions on every side. When the Apostles heard that "the Gentiles also had received the word of God," a kind of papacy began amongst those people who belonged to the circumcision, they felt they ought to be always the centre, the fountain of truth; that they must be supreme and infallible; and those of the circumcision insisted that they could not eat with the uncircumcised. It is not so much a person as a principle which S. Paul refers to when he speaks of the son of perdition at work in the world, who exalts himself above all that is called God, and sits in the temple of God calling himself, as it were, God[1]. That determinedness of human prejudice which claims to be supreme and infallible on religious matters, and requires all people to attend to it; which claims the right to look into every point and dictate on all things, is evil in doctrine and practice. And we must notice that when a supreme authority thus claims to rule all, there always rises up another supreme infallibility which will listen to no power, no authority—the infallibility of those who think they know beforehand how God is going to deal with all men.

The worst is there are always Two Supreme Infallibilities when Authority claims to rule all.

How does S. Peter meet the supreme infallibility of those who without hesitation state how God will deal with all mankind? By a simple narrative. He begins to expound the matter to them in order.

vv. 4—14. "But Peter began and expounded the matter unto them in order, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon the which

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 4.

when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the heaven. And I heard also a Voice saying unto me, Rise Peter; kill, and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But a Voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house."

Peter meets the Supreme Infallibility by a simple statement of the facts—History:

We may ask how this applies to the subsequent exigencies of the Church. Let us observe that history at all times is an answer to unjust and tyrannical claims. It is said that one of the members of the Vatican Council which declared the infallibility of the Vicar of Christ exclaimed, "At last we have done with history." But in religious matters we of the Church of England claim that history is with us, for the real principle of the Church of England has always been historical[1]. In this case the claim S. Peter meets is that the Gentiles could not be saved except by becoming proselytes. S. Peter meets them by a simple statement of facts, and an inquiry. After telling the story in unvarnished words, he says:

and an inquiry, "What else could I have done?"

vv. 15—17. "And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?"

[1] Cf. *Fishers of Men*, by Archbishop Benson, p. 124.

Then comes a very different tone to this infallible tone; they "glorified God."

v. 18. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

We may ask why is the narrative told twice? The answer is simple: it is simply the inartificial way in which S. Luke puts together his story. S. Luke repeats first what he had heard reported in Caesarea of the facts[1], and then he gives word for word what S. Peter himself said at Jerusalem. The two accounts are alike, but not in every detail, for in the xith chapter we have S. Peter's own wording, personal touches, the vivid narrative of an eye-witness. S. Peter says (xi. 5) "it (the sheet) came *even to me*"; and again in *v.* 6, he says "*when I had fastened mine eyes*"; this is not given by the others from whom S. Luke drew his first account, for they could not know how S. Peter had fixed his utmost attention on the great sheet; they give a quiet narrative of what had happened. S. Peter says again "it was *drawn up into Heaven*," or rather it was "plucked up," "dragged up"; this is plainly the touch of the person who had seen it. Again, he distinguishes between the "Voice" that spoke to him and the Spirit that spoke within. There is one point which I do not understand. Cornelius, it is said, saw "an angel," but in xi. 13 S. Peter speaks of "the angel"; does he mean that he believed it to be an angel who had taken part in other things relating to man's salvation? In *v.* 15 he says "as I *began* to speak"; no one else could have known whether he was going to say much or little, and the other narrators say "while Peter yet spoke": and in *v.* 16 he says "then *remembered I the word of the Lord*"; where again no one of "the brethren" could have told what was passing in S. Peter's mind, but in his own account he says conviction was borne in upon him when he *remembered* the words of Christ about the baptism of S. John which none but an Apostle could have remembered.

S. Luke's natural way of shewing there was a separate account at Caesarea.

S. Peter's recollection of a word of Jesus explained the riddle to him when he thought of it.

The next point which we have to notice is the doctrine

[1] Cf. pp. 239, 521.

conveyed in the 17th verse. The openness and nobleness of mind of S. Peter contrasts with the narrowness of these people of the circumcision. He forgot all superiority of race, of Jew over Gentile, and says at once "God gave them the like gift as He did also unto us": he is anxious to feel that God's tenderness is thrown out to every human being. "If He gave them the equal gift how could I resist?" He does not stand upon his being a Jew, an Apostle, a leader among the Apostles, or upon the charge that Christ had given him; he allows that all are equal with him, as he works this thought out and realizes "God made no difference."

Their Baptism equal with his own (17) in effects.

But order must not be dispensed with, and we see how Peter follows the order of the Church. So Christ Himself did, and S. John was struck with amazement when the Lamb of God came to him, and exclaimed, "Comest Thou to me?" Christ's answer was, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness[1]." So S. Peter when the Holy Ghost was fallen upon these people yet remembered the word of the Lord, that they should be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost[2]. He threw himself into the ordinances of Christ in the midst of his ecstasy; he knew that nothing sound or lasting would be completed upon "the Rock" except on the lines which Christ Himself laid down; and asks (x. 47), "Can any man forbid the water?" This is a great lesson of Church order; even in the midst of real divine ecstasy, Christ's ordinances are not to be violated. We must follow facts: 'If Christ has received these men, they must be baptized.' And those who heard him held their peace, impressed with the power of the conversion, and glorified God. I was talking once to a great mission preacher about his teaching, and asked him, "Where in your teaching would you place the Sacraments ordained by Christ?" He answered, "I would leave them to take care of themselves." Again, the Salvation Army urges, "Sacraments would divide us." Is not this making oneself wiser than God? making oneself wiser than S. Peter, who, when he heard the Gentiles speak

Not on that account even the Water to be dispensed with.

A Lesson in Church Order in midst of real Ecstasies.

Organisation not to be violated—but to follow facts.

[1] Matt. iii. 15. [2] Matt. xxviii. 19.

with tongues and saw the Holy Ghost descend upon them, in the midst of Divine ecstasy exclaimed, "Who shall forbid the water?" S. Peter follows facts; these men have been baptized from Heaven—then let the baptism of Earth follow.

vv. 19, 20. "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia[1]" (close to the north of Palestine), "and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch," on their return that is, "spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."

Continued wave of Dispersion.

Cypriots, Cyrenians, a back wave at Antioch, [preaching] to the Greeks.

See the radiation of people after Stephen's death going out into all countries, knowing nothing of their duty to the Gentiles, and see again the back wave returning to Antioch of those who spoke of Christ to the Greeks also. This is so exactly like the beginning of our early Church in Britain; the preachers in Cornwall went on to Brittany, at the same time as early preachers from Brittany were leaving there and going over to Ireland, and a little band from the Christian centres in Ireland were sending missionaries to Cornwall. Here we see at once the Christians beginning to "witness." You see these sparks in the stubble burning through the world, setting it on fire with the love of Christ.

Notice how utterly *v.* 20 refutes the idea that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ came by degrees; that first of all He was thought to be only a preacher, then little by little became greater in the minds of His disciples till He was declared divine. All history is exactly opposite to that. They preached "The Lord Jesus." He was Lord from the very beginning.

From the first it is the Lord. Not a trace of the Teacher, the Master, the Philosopher.

vv. 21—24. "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the Church that was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the

Then this troubles the Infallibles just as the business of Cornelius.

[1] There we find them ch. xxi., xxvii.

grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

Barnabas as Commissioner to Antioch. Settles it summarily, "hold to it."

Mark how Barnabas comes as a commissioner from Jerusalem to see whether the Gentiles are being saved, and tells the Church there to go on as they are doing; then we read of "a great number," and then we hear of "much people"—a multitude, turning to the Lord. Barnabas was "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"; his influence and example carry weight. He sees that now numbers have increased there is more work to do, and more teachers are wanted, and he goes off to Tarsus for Paul, who was still there in his loneliness, working by himself among the country people, near Tarsus. These people round Tarsus were the Highlanders of Asia Minor. You remember he had been sent home from Jerusalem because his life was not safe there[1].

Then Barnabas descries the very opening for Saul.

vv. 25, 26. "And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the Church, and taught much people."

Then a whole year of quiet progress, happy teaching.

Antioch was a kind of Eastern Rome; a gathering place of the East; all merchandise from Syria was brought to Antioch to be sent on to Rome; and Rome, trading with Syria, sent merchandise to Antioch. Thus it was full of the civilization of every part of the world, and of the vices of all parts of Armenia and Asia Minor. There was a saying, "The Syrian Orontes has poured into the Tiber and corrupted it." Antioch was the Paris of those days, and the population were famous for one quality which belongs to the Parisians now; many famous nicknames have been made in Paris; and Antioch had the same faculty of humorous appreciation. At Antioch people began to call the disciples after the name of their Master and fixed on them the nickname of Christians; *v.* 26, "and it came to pass...that the disciples were called

Antioch, the Paris of the time.

Christian a nickname.

[1] ch. ix. 30, see p. 222.

Christians first at Antioch." The name is used only in two other passages in the New Testament; when Agrippa says to S. Paul, 'you are making short work of persuading me to be a Christian[1]'; and S. Peter says, 'if you suffer for evil-doing you may well take it patiently, but if you are suffering as a Christian—as the most despised of all sects—lift up your hearts and bear it for His sake[2].' These witty, malicious, fashionable people stigmatised this new sect by the name of Him who had died, as a malefactor, the death of a slave outside the city walls. If we believe the prophecies there will be a day again when the name of Christian will be a reproach. Even now we seem to see signs of this. Many are unwilling to witness as Christians who do not shrink from acting in the name of religious philanthropy, or for the sake of humanity; and I think that there may again be reproach to be borne for the sake of that Name, and "the fan will purge the floor." If this comes, how shall we face it?

And now 'Christian' is becoming a reproach again; and will be more so. And a very happy thing for us too.

vv. 27—30. "Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."

Now is not all this compressed matter very vivid? Is it a real narrative or a fictitious one? Do you think it possible that a forger would have known all the details mentioned by Peter in the preceding verses? The details are so distinct, so real and true to the time that the narrative reads as if it came out of the daily paper of the time. But the most important point is this. What was the real gift which was given? What was it that was so essential which these people, who had thought themselves infallible, were being made to know?

What was it after all which was Given? What was it troubled the Infallibles and made them feel they had been fallible *for once* only?

[1] Acts xxvi. 28.

[2] 1 Pet. iv. 14—16. Cf. ii. 20. Cf. Christiani, Suet. *Nero* 16, "...afflicti suppliciis Christiani." Tac. *Annal.* xv. 44, "...quos...vulgus...Christianos appellabat."

The Gift was Metanoia for Zoe.

It was that the Gentiles were being brought near to God. The gift was Repentance unto Life, granted to Jews and Gentiles alike.

The lives of all of us are like a train of pilgrims passing out across the wilderness; every life starts with a company of hopes, fears, desires, ambitions, passions, inclinations and fascinations, yet all these entities have each their own life. And the route of such a caravan is marked with skeletons; you may see along the track the whitening bones of those who have fallen by the way—the hopes and desires, ambitions which lie dead in the path. The fascinations with which you started are skeletons now, many unburied, it is well they are dead. But can you bear the idea of *all* these desires, good and bad alike, lying dead, all high hopes perishing, all great ideals dying one by one out of you, dying by the roadside till you become a denuded being with none of these hopes, fears, strong desires about you? Do you want the caravan never to get home, all its bones to lie in the wilderness? The only way to arrive at the end as living as when you began, is by Repentance unto *Life*. This is the only thing that can keep you alive to the end, so that you do not reach the next world half dead. It is very difficult to make a definite decision for God, more difficult by far for you than for poor people. How soon they can be moved to repent; and often they have not half so much to repent of as you. Theirs is a life of duty, in a rough way, but still, a life of duty, of self-denial and endurance and hard work, of reliance upon God; it is among the poor that we find a strange assurance that the Lord will take care of them as He has done. They take sorrows so gently as from above; with broken hearts, they work on as if no sorrow had fallen upon them; they see what things are sins because on the whole their life is a life of duty. But when we think of ourselves and our own days, such waste of time, of opportunities, of the powers that began to blossom early and have come to nothing, such means as have come rolling in from God to be at our disposal: a large income going on for thirty or forty years amounting to millions—where is it?

It is as necessary as ever.

what has it done? How have our years gone from February to July and round again? What has come of them? How many people do we know who have gone steadily through that time all these years? Many, when they come to thirty-five are quite worn out in spirit, look gloomy, feel old and look old and have nothing to shew for it. But the poorer women have borne children, have kept their homes in order, have worked and have brought up their children to work, and sent them out into the world. What has become of so many families which started with such glorious positions? Think of all those people who have been living a life of vanity with only a religious turn—a turn for flowers and lights. They have shewn their religion in building or in decorating a church, in pursuing some new religious idea. What has it come to? They live only to vanity, with a religious twist in their lives. Their prayers are formal, are *lifeless*. They think of their dreamy irresolute hours, as of the time spent by Mary sitting at Jesus' feet. They think of the weary, dreary fashionableness, of the strength spent upon dress, upon taking young people into danger, as if this were their duty, and they, like Martha, cumbered with much serving. When they feel there is no making up for all this waste, when this begins to pall upon them, and they feel that all is vanity, how will they live? What a moment! What will the good angel feel who has watched over their childhood with eyes filled so often with angelic tears?—wondering—'Will they now repent?' Can they take their vanities, their wasted time and opportunities and sins, and lay them before God? Can they take all before Him and ask for Repentance unto Life? Or will they feel it impossible? Will they fall into the half-death of indifference? Will they feel that life has become a dull perpetual movement, like a thing dead, and that there is nothing for them now but to try and ignore the past, or worst of all to declare that their life was a life forced upon them, that they are guiltless and innocent, and that they have been living the lives that they were meant to live? Of these three conditions there is only one with hope in it, and that is Repentance unto Life.

Living to Vanity with a Religious twist,

from which comes Indifference.

And Indifference dresses itself up as Innocence.

Here comes in that overwhelming duty of Witnessing; and Praying can help you to do it.

Now you can help each other, as I believe no one else can help you. You can help those who are living in the world and pass as being the Church of God. By your experience, you know what your own failures and stumblingblocks are, what your trials and temptations have been, what snares came about your feet. You can guess what these have been to your friends. And here comes in that overwhelming duty of witnessing. Nothing can save them but Repentance unto life. No one else but you can really touch these people. Have compassion upon them, pray that, without vanity, without self-assertion, God will give you great grace and power to help.

XXVII.

July 24th, 1889.

The Acts of Peter.

Acts xii. 1—23.

Holy Week, A.D. 44. Martyrdom of S. James. Compare Rev. vi. 9.

8, 11. Working of Thoughts of S. Peter genuinely traceable.

Reminiscences of S. John, xxi. 8.

9. Acts xi. 5 still fresh. Touches of personal narrative.

The Church's continual prayer for him — "Coincidence." Women's lead—servants.

Herod; the contrast. His "knowledge of life and policy." Josephus's narrative of his death.

Imprisonments, Material and Immaterial.

The *same* world-powers which could then chain only Christian Bodies have advanced and now chain Christian Souls.

Deliverances from them analogous.

vv. 1, 2. "Now about this time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

This is the eve of S. James's martyrdom, of whom we read in the first verse, and the opening words of this chapter are the close of the Epistle for S. James's Day. There are only two great martyrs whose martyrdom is recorded in the Acts; S. James and S. Stephen.

vv. 3—5. "And when he (Herod) saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the

days of unleavened bread. And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the Church unto God for him."

This imprisonment of S. Peter was intended by Herod to be his last, and it is followed by S. Peter's deliverance. S. Luke puts together the dreadful contrast between S. Peter's peaceful waiting for his end and his deliverance from death, and the terrible end of Herod (*vv.* 20—24). We notice that in the beginning of the Acts, S. Luke implies that he had put these narratives together in the same kind of way as he had done in his own Gospel, where he says that he had accounts from those who were eye-witnesses; for the preface to the Acts seems almost to take up and run on with the preface to the Gospel of S. Luke.

vv. 6—10. "And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed; and he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened unto them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him."

Here we have a very clear indication of the source from which S. Luke drew his account of the deliverance of S. Peter, for he actually tells us S. Peter's thoughts. "He wist not that it was true"—no one could have said that except S. Peter himself; the story, although it is cast in the third person, is

dictated by the person who experienced it; only S. Peter could have told that "he thought he saw a vision."

The time when this took place was in Holy Week of A.D. 44, for Herod intended that Peter should be put to death directly the Passover was over; so the Church was keeping Holy Week at this time—so few years after our Lord ascended into heaven. Thus S. James must have been martyred before Easter Day, and it is an old tradition, though too late to be accepted as historical evidence, that S. James was martyred on Good Friday before the Passover. We know the year, because we know from profane history[1] that Herod Agrippa I. died in A.D. 44. Holy Week, eleven years after.

Let us look at the visions of S. John (Rev. vi. 9—11) and notice especially the 11th verse. The word "brethren" sounds more general; seems to include brethren in the spirit. But read it simply as "until...*their brothers* which should be killed as they too were, should be fulfilled[2]." When we remember that John's brother James was killed by the sword, may we not think that S. John saw in this vision amongst those who had been slain by the sword for the Lamb's sake, and were waiting till others should also suffer thus, his brother James?

S. Luke is always natural and graphic in his writings, and, without intending it, he draws our attention to the heat of the prison in *v.* 8. Among Cyprian's letters a confessor speaks of the furnace-heat of his prison. The angel bids Peter gird himself and put on his shoes, as if shewing that Peter had cast off his clothing for coolness. He was securely chained to two soldiers; because Herod determined to please the Jews by exterminating these Christians, newly so-called, and this man had had the audacity to come down to Caesarea and convert his own officers and soldiers; he must be made an example of.

Let us trace some of the little things that lie below the surface; the angel stood before him and said, "Follow me."

[1] Jos. *Ant.* XIX. 8. 2.

[2] Translation from *The Apocalypse, a Study.*

Much lies there. You remember the walk by the Sea of Galilee when Christ appeared in the early morning and said to Peter after he had made a new Confession—the image occasioned perhaps by the active gesture with which he "girt his coat about him and cast himself into the sea,"—"Verily, verily...when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not[1]." This must have flashed on Peter's mind, for he had made up his mind that the end foretold by his Master was now at hand as his words in *v.* 11 prove. The angel told him to gird his garment about him and follow him; and his Lord had told him "another shall gird thee," but after that had used the identical words "follow me[2]." S. Peter had turned towards S. John and asked, "What shall this man do?" and Christ answered, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." The saying was well known for there were other people who had witnessed that scene by the sea-shore and S. John records it, "This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." All through his imprisonment there must have stirred in Peter's mind the remembrance of the scene by the Lake of Gennesaret, for his imprisonment and chaining would have appeared to be the fulfilment of the Lord's words.

Knew by Ζῶσαι that Jo. xxi. 18 was not come, as he had thought.

In Raphael's picture each point here is finely given—the tired soldiers, the figure huddled up in the corner, half-undressed; the chains on the hand on one side, on the foot on the other. The condition of prisons in the time of Raphael would have been little changed. The "light that shined in the cell" is given as a blaze of quiet light.

vv. 11, 12. "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of

[1] Jo. xxi. 18. [2] Jo. xxi. 19—24.

Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying."

Must we not think of those people praying in the house for him? They dreaded losing that strong man—"the rock-man"; James was killed, Stephen also gone, Paul not able to stay, and now Peter was to be taken away from them. They must have been praying the Lord that the girding of Peter might not come yet. Why did S. Peter think, as it says in the 9th verse, that this was a vision? probably because he had still in mind the vision seen by the sea at Joppa. He thought this was a second vision; that one on the house-top was to prove to him that all men were clean; then the letting down of the sheet, the contents, the Voice, had all conveyed teaching. Now the leading of the angel, the falling of the chains, the passage through one barrier, then another, the spontaneous opening of the gate may have been interpreted as shewing him that the word of God was not bound. How natural all this is. He must have imagined this vision was to shew him that, though he had to die, his work should live for Christ's sake. So he passed one barrier after another, 'a first ward, the second, the iron gate and down one lane'; and this impression continued till the angel disappeared, and he was alone in the cold eastern night, under the shining of the moon and stars, and knew where he was. So he went straight to where people were praying for him, in the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark.

Perhaps this one of the Prayers, ἐκτενῆς. How spare the Rock-man? The new building just begun.

ὅραμα. He had xi. 5 still on the brain. What can this [vision] mean? that I die after Paskha and yet my work lives on?

Angel gone—he alone—and knew where he was. So he went straight to where people were praying for him.

If such a thing had happened to the modern Christian, what would he have thought? Probably that it was a very interesting coincidence that these people should just have been praying for him when he was escaping from a great danger; he would have mentioned it all his life as a quite interesting coincidence—quite singular. If we believe in prayer we must believe in it and its answer, as cause and effect, and we are getting very much out of the way of believing. Is a patient ill? and do the doctors say he will not get well again? There is a whole Church praying for him and he recovers, and the doctors cannot say why, they never had such a case before in their experience; people say, "It was a very remarkable

'Coincidence."

recovery[1]." That is not Christianity, that is not faith. People pray for something, and because it does not happen to be brought about in the way they expected, they do not believe it to be the answer to their prayers. S. John tells us that prayer is answered, "If we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition which we have asked of him[2]." It may not be in the very form or circumstance we ask for, but in some way which we shall understand by and by; but when it does come in the very form we have prayed for, is it not shame to us if we are afraid lest people should think us superstitious for attributing to "supernatural causes" what has come?

The women's part. The house at their service —down to the maid.

At the door of the house where the Christians were praying, we come in contact again with women's work in the Christian Church. Peter is delivered in answer to the prayers of women. Here is a well-to-do lady gathering together Christians to pray in her house, and they do not think it merely a coincidence when S. Peter appears saved. Through the work of Christian women the character of women began to develope; through this they can become as Christian women are now, liberal and not lavish, not squanderers of the wealth that God gives them, nor turning a deaf ear to anybody who is in need, providing just what is needful, saying nothing of themselves but the helpers in every good cause. This is the character of women which began to dawn upon the world to do work for Christ.

v. 13. "And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda."

It was in accordance with the usage of the time that S. Peter's knock should bring a maidservant to the gate. In the old world the door was kept by a woman, a female slave;

[1] The following illustration occurs in the note book: "If a boy at college finds himself suddenly all but penniless, prays earnestly for help, devoting himself; assures a friend that friends will be raised to him and his; meets one at his college gate who bids him resort to him for everything.—It 's a very singular coincidence." Cf. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. I. ch. III. p. 94. He said later that at this time of his life he used daily to say Ps. xci. 'Qui habitat.'

[2] 1 Jo. v. 15.

here we have the little maid Rhoda or Rose, and in the palace of Caiaphas we read of the woman who kept the door[1].

vv. 14—18. "And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter."

The maid "Rose." Second instance of Christian people interesting their servants in the work of the Church.

Rhoda's position in the Christian household did not preclude her from taking part in the anxiety of the Church assembled there. "Rose" was as much interested in the deliverance of Peter, whose voice was well known to her, as anyone else. This is the second instance, in the early history of the Church, where we have the servants taken into the love and confidence of their masters and mistresses. First Cornelius and his soldier, and now this maid Rose in the household of Mary at Jerusalem. Some people find it difficult to think that there is any humour in Scripture, but if we look at this account, the door left shut, Peter standing knocking outside, in the clear, cold night, in all the danger of pursuit, and Rhoda running backwards and forwards with her news, restrained from opening the door between fear and joy, it is difficult to exclude the idea of humour. The narrative is all so life-like.

vv. 19—23. "And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and tarried there. Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's

[1] Jo. xviii. 16 f.

chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Herod, the abominable tyrant, handed the soldiers over to death when he heard of Peter's deliverance. It was his character always to be in a rage about something. He turns his anger next against the people of Tyre and Sidon, who from their barren land by the sea-shore were dependent on his country for their supply of corn. They were in terror lest, in his displeasure, he should stop supplies. Josephus in his history of the Jews tells us how Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, a tissue of gold, to receive a deputation of this people who came to humble themselves before him. Josephus does not give the reason of the deputation, but his account, adding certain details, confirms this story. It was Herod's birthday, he says, and he made a great oration to them in the early morning, and when the sun shone upon his gold raiment it blazed like the sun, and the people cried out, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' "Vox regis, vox dei." Is not "Vox populi, vox dei," as heathen an utterance? The king looked up and saw an owl over his head. Long before he had been told that this would be an omen of his death, he was stricken instantly and died[1].

How strange to have this little bit of worldly gossip and the Acts put side by side. The contrast is so strong between Peter the sincere, straightforward, devoted man who was ready to die for the sake of his Lord; the simplicity of his existence contrasts with the history of Herod. Peter was brought up to be the messenger of the Gospel to the human race. Herod Agrippa I. had gone to Rome when quite young thinking to make friends there; he was chosen as the friend of an evil youth, afterwards the Emperor Caligula,

[1] Jos. *Ant.* XIX. 8. 2.

but Tiberius seeing this was afraid of him and put him in prison for many years. Then Tiberius died; Caligula came to the throne and could not heap sufficient riches upon Herod, and made him one of the chief princes under the Roman Empire. Herod was an Edomite, and it was his great aim to please the Jews, to be popular with them, for his security would be risked by indifference to their religion and interests; sometimes his intervention was for good and sometimes for evil. It is related that once at the Feast of Tabernacles when the law of Deuteronomy was read, "no stranger shall rule over you," he delighted the Jews by bursting into tears before all the people—for he was an Idumean; but they cried aloud, "Fear not, thou art one of us; thou also art a Jew." Once Caligula threatened to have his golden statue erected in the Temple; the Jews were in despair at such desecration and entreated Herod to protect them; he interceded and by his success won the people completely.

Herod—to "please the people" his character.

We must return to the imprisonment of Peter. I do not wish to take it merely as a type for far-fetched lessons, for the imprisonment is *the same* that many of you suffer from in the world. The material things that kept Peter back from the work of his apostolate were iron chains and bars, but there are many souls as surely bound and kept back from doing the work in the world which God intended for them, by the chains of the rulers of the darkness of this world. The world-rulers kept Peter from doing his Master's work, Herod interposed with prison and chains. In the same way the rulers of darkness of this world will keep some soul from its work in this world by making it as comfortable as possible in the body, as well as by some physical drawback and hindrance. No amount of comfort would have kept Peter from his work; but there are noble, beautiful souls who do desire the salvation of the world, who would not be kept by bars of iron, who would be only more eager if only a little martyrdom, a little suffering were to befall them, but who can be kept back by giving them everything the heart can desire. Satan's point is to tie down souls, and he may do

The imprisonment is the same as many souls suffer from the world, [so also] the deliverance.

It is not that chains are iron and bars stone that makes the difference.

it better by making them comfortable instead of wretched. Surely the imprisonment of the soul by the same powers is for the same purpose,—to prevent the soul which God made, and to which He has given such lovely qualities, from fulfilling its work.

The world-powers imprison souls materially and immaterially in both cases really.

There are material imprisonments and immaterial imprisonments. I saw a child of two years old who had been cruelly starved and treated by its father, so that it is degraded in appearance, deformed in body. The father is in prison for six months, the child's soul must be in a cramped, unhealthy prison for life—a material prison. Some souls are imprisoned by the magnificence of their possessions and position. But the world-powers have immaterial prisons too; there is a chain of idleness on one, of vice on another, of ill-temper on another, of restlessness and discontent upon another. How many of us are lying bound as much as if we were fastened by two chains to two soldiers. People are conscious of their imprisonment. There exist people who would face martyrdom boldly if they were called to do so for Christianity, but these same people are quite unable to face breaking loose from little habits of luxury, or to face the loss of a certain sort of consideration, which would be involved in their standing out boldly on the side of Christianity. Satan knows that these are the right chains to forge now-a-days for those who would serve our Lord.

Such bondage we see in the case of Mr Greville[1], who writes of his hatred and contempt for racing, but in the same breath declares that it is *impossible* for him to break through his own connection with it. Talk to some rich lady and she will allow it; she does not care to go here or there, but she must go when she would give anything to be at home, to rest and be quiet; she must dress in an expensive way, must smile on certain persons whose characters she despises, must have them to her house. If one of those men wishes to marry her daughter she "must allow it," though she knows the best of reasons against it. Look at the faces of many

[1] *The Greville Memoirs*, Ed. 1888, vol. II. p. 382.

beautiful women whom you see driving in carriages; for one face shewing that the life is being passed in doing the work God sent it to do, you will see twenty faces filled with vanity about their dress, their equipage, or their appearance, or discontented with the world and everything in it; such souls know that they are in prison. There is no other power that imprisons them except this power that tried to keep Peter from his work, and so shut him up. But for each one of us there is a deliverance, when we may be free again, in the open air. Those who desire to be free must find out what is the work God sent them to do; they must surround themselves with prayers of others. Ask God to give you a believing heart and He will shew you His work, and then ask believing men and women to pray for you, and there will be light in the prison as there was when the angel appeared to Peter. The angel struck Peter; do not be astonished if it is a blow that rouses you. Then first the chains will fall off. It may be some time before you are free; you think of the iron gate, and the long way from the city through the watching enemies, but God will take care of all that. Peter and the angel walked quietly through all the guards who took no notice of them, the iron gate opened of itself, and they walked along the long lane to the Church in Mary's house where the people were praying for him. Then he understood all danger was past.

Let me ask one more question. If there is any poor soul so imprisoned who might be delivered to-morrow by the earnest prayers of others, to do the work of God, what would such a soul do? What would you or I do? Some people would want to go back. Where will you go?

The same world-powers which then could enchain only the Bodies have now advanced their standards and chain the Souls of Christians.

Is there any Deliverance from them?

(1) If you want to be free to work for the Master,

(2) If you get prayers made for you,

there will be light in the prison, perhaps a blow.

Some time before you are free. What is the good of just chains being loosened? There's another line of watchers.

Yes, and an iron gate, and it opens silently, and you are free and dazed.

Where will you go? Some would go back to prison—will you?

FIRST CONVERSIONS OF UNBELIEVERS AND BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH.

Acts xii. 24—xvi. 5.

Christ and the Great Man, xii. 24. (xxviii.)

Christ and the Town, xiii. 14. (xxix.)

Christ and Country Places, xiv. 6. (xxx.)

Christ from Centres, xiv. 20. (xxxi.)

Christ in Council, xv. 13. (xxxii.)

Christ through Friends, xv. 36. (xxxiii.)

XXVIII.

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 19th, 1890.

Christ and the Great Man.

Acts xii. 24—xiii. 12.

A. How Christians began to care for others and began to move and to be moved.

"Ministered and fasted." "Orders." "Mission."

B. The Proconsul—"Man of Understanding."

C. Second contact with "Magic." (See ch. viii.)

Able and fascinating influences used to keep people blind—Freedom from Religion—Forms of Religion—Fashion—(Opening Lives).

The well-adapted punishment and the shock of the Inquirer.

Who are the Church now? and whose is the duty?

The subject to which we are coming now is especially appropriate to Lent, to our circumstances and to the work which God calls almost all of us to do. I intend to divide the portion, Acts xii. 24—xv. 35, into six parts. If you will read through these verses you will see that the period embraced gives us the first conversion of Unbelievers and the Building up of the Church. We ended last year with the conversion by S. Peter of the Roman Cornelius, who had already advanced from heathendom to a belief in the God of Israel.

To-day we have "Christ and the great man"; next week "Christ and the conversion of a town." Then "Christ and country places." And in spite of the change of manners and customs, we shall still find that the heart of the country places is the same, and what was good for the country then is

How Christians began to move and be moved.

good for the country now. On the 4th Wednesday, we deal with the subject of how work is to be done and strong centres formed, without which Christianity cannot grow. On the 5th with 'Christ in Council'—the instruction for the help of the Catholic Church. On the 6th with 'Christ through friends.'

Acts xii. 24, 25. "But the word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark."

Antioch was just now shewing symptoms of becoming one of those strong centres, and its position as a wealthy and magnificent capital was a most important one. "John whose surname was Mark" is evidently the Mark who wrote the Gospel.

xiii. 1. "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."

The fact that Symeon Niger, the black or dark featured, and Lucius of Cyrene are thus named together would lead one to infer that they were friends from the North of Africa. Next comes Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, the son of Herod the Great. Josephus tells us[1] that there was a man named Manahem who, when Herod was a boy, had prophesied his future greatness; this Manaen, mentioned in the Acts, was probably a son of this man, and may have been brought up with Herod's son at Rome, where it was the custom to send young princes for their education, as the Emperor wished them to be bound to the Empire by ties of loyalty and affection to the court and city.

When you consider how great Saul became in preaching Christianity, it may seem strange that he is mentioned last. This could scarcely happen unless this record was contemporary with the very time in which he lived; this was the order in which the Christians had been accustomed to think of these men. Saul was only a convert at this time and had brought the Christians into much odium.

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xv. 10. 5.

vv. 2, 3. "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

λειτουργούντων, doing what we are.

"Ministering to the Lord." Not so very unlike what we are doing, seeking His companionship in order to gain inspiration and strength to serve Him. The word "ministering" is the same as our word "liturgy," and should shew us that they regarded public worship, not as an utterance only, but as forming a serious, earnest part of their lives—a service.

Fasting for a time;

"They fasted." The Church bids us on Ash Wednesday exercise such abstinence as we can during the next forty days. The Apostles were keeping together, encouraging themselves by their prayers, disciplining themselves and fasting, and it was in this holy time that they received the call to preach the Word. Then when the call to a mission had come, their simplicity of life was not over, it seems as if they doubled their self-dedication and fasted, especially with a view to inspiration, for again in the third verse it says that they fasted and prayed and laid their hands on the two who had been thus called.

then fast specially for inspiration.

"Orders," "Mission."

This Ordination is the first instance we know of, of hands being laid on some to separate them from the other Apostles. The window on our left representing this scene was given by two American Bishops, White and Provoost, who were consecrated in this chapel with fasting and prayer[1]. This beginning has now spread into a magnificent Church throughout the United States. It may also help us to think of the continuance and reality of the Church's organization, that from this scene at Antioch one continuous thread has run on in a never-broken line.

vv. 4, 5. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant."

[1] On Feb. 4th, 1787.

Mark not ordained.

Three went together, but John Mark soon made the great mistake of leaving them. He had not been ordained like Barnabas and Saul, and could not bear what they had to go through. They went down the river to Seleucia, which was the port of the Orontes and stood near its mouth, and from there they sailed to Cyprus, landing at Salamis, where they began to preach the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They now learned a little what their ordination meant, to what it called them, and for what it qualified them.

vv. 6, 7. "And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus: which was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding."

Paphos was one of the most beautiful and licentious of all profane shrines, a place in which the antient worship of Nature had developed into utter profligacy. S. Peter had to contend at the outset of his work with a similar Magus, Simon the sorcerer. There was real vitality to fight against in this magic dealing, and Christianity had a harder struggle against these powers than against the worship of Venus and of the other heathen gods and goddesses.

The "Proconsul" was the highest representative of the Roman Emperor, and was invested with almost supreme power in his district. In *Paradise Regained* reference is made to the great show at the gates of Rome,

> "Praetors, proconsuls to their provinces
> Hasting, or on return[1]."

There is a very significant point to be noticed about this proconsul. The Romans had two kinds of provinces, Imperial provinces under the jurisdiction of the Empire and governed by military power, and the Senatorial provinces, dependent upon the Civil power of the Senate. Some have tried to prove that the term "proconsul" was a mistake in this chapter, as Strabo[2], speaking of Cyprus, tells us that it was a military province which would have been governed by a

[1] *Paradise Regained*, Bk. IV. l. 61. Cf. pp. 432, 641.
[2] Strabo, XVIII.

praetor; but in B.C. 22 the Emperor Augustus made over Cyprus to the Senate[1]; from that time it became dependent upon the Senate, and in S. Paul's time it was therefore a proconsular province. An inscription has lately been found in Cyprus upon which is the name "Paulus Proconsul," proving without doubt the accuracy of S. Luke's account[2].

S. Luke says that Sergius Paulus was "a man of understanding"; and Pliny, the greatest writer among the Romans on Natural History, mentions that a great many of the facts in his second book were communicated to him by the observations of his friend, one Sergius Paulus[3]. Thus we see how these little threads of probabilities or possibilities of evidence work into one another and hold together the narratives with small confirmations of its truth.

Sergius Paulus was evidently interested in what he heard of the Apostles, and sent for them in order to hear about the new movement.

vv. 7—9. "The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him, and said...."

"Saul, called Paul." Some people have tried to connect this change of name with Sergius Paulus, others have supposed he took the name Paul because he was little of stature. It was common for Orientals moving among other nations to take the name which sounded most like their own; in the history of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha we have instances of this[4]. "Filled with the Holy Ghost" does not mean that S. Paul was not always filled with the Holy Spirit, but seems to refer to a special inspiration at this moment.

vv. 10—12. "O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now,

[1] Dion Cass. LIII. 12 (13). [2] *S. Paul the Traveller*, p. 74.

[3] Cf. *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. I. p. 127, and see references given.

[4] pp. 351, 405.

behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

The proconsul was astonished or, as the word here means, "shocked" at the teaching of the lesson of the Lord upon Elymas. Elymas had sought to keep him in spiritual blindness and the Lord had suddenly visited the sorcerer with natural blindness. This city where Elymas exercised his evil influence was the very centre of vice, and, like Corinth, was known for its proverbs. From S. Paul's address to Elymas we gather that he was a clever man, a man of personal fascination, though feeble in conflict, and that he had spared no means to gain his own ends. He was one of those who, if he had been good, might have been a great benefactor. "Son of the devil"—filled with all the qualities of the Evil One. What a terrible contrast to the "Son of God," "the Son of Man," titles which assure us that He is perfect Man, with all the qualities of God's character which belong to men in Him.

Second contact with Magic.

[First] the Apostle of the Circumcision before the Samaritan Simon.

[Now] the Apostle of the Gentiles before Elymas.

An able man by S. Paul's censure.

S. Paul fixed his eyes upon this man, who was trying to counterwork and calumniate all the ways of God, devoting all his abilities to give them the wrong turn. With a wonderful touch of pathos he says that the blindness shall only prevent his "seeing the sun for a season"; shewing him that he has drawn the wrath of God upon himself by his false influence upon the proconsul, whom for so long he had tried to blind mentally.

Are there not many influences at work amongst us to keep us from seeing? The poor have many awakenings, their illusions are shaken from day to day. But how powerful are the magic influences that keep many greater people blind; they are bound in thousands of ways; sometimes by the charm of beauty and grace, and sometimes by the charm of intellectual life; forms of religion, freedom from religion, fashion,—all these hold people with a spell of blindness.

Magic influences which keep great people blind.

These dangerous magic influences meet beautiful, sweet lives at their opening; when first a young married woman begins a life of wealth and position how strong are the influences that attend her. The vow which a man makes at his Ordination is less solemn than the vow she takes. She gives her whole power of promising in that answer "I will." His is "I will endeavour," "I will apply myself thereto." She has great influence upon others, she has entered upon a little kingdom. There is money coming in to be administered for God. It is God's money. Then the little family begins to form and there gather souls dependent upon her; children's habits, children's spiritual faith are dependent upon this young life for their training. Young women ought to ask themselves, "Have I thought of the years for which I am making this great promise? I have been brought up to Christianity, but is it a real thing to me? will it enable me to resist the strong influences for evil which may beset me? or will it fade into thin air? Am I ready to face difficulty, shall I yield, will I give up Christ?" The Spirit of the world hurls, as Milton says, his

They keep blind the opening lives.

> ..."dazzling spells into the spungy air,
> Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
> And give it false presentments[1]."

These spells do not work by themselves, there are those who apply them, those who keep others blind, who use spells, charms, fascinations to keep others back from the faith; they work the charm by lips, eyes, and manner; they exercise the same kind of sorcery as Elymas, but their spells are not so capable of being exposed, they are far finer and more subtle, more delicate than his. Pray that you may be filled with the Holy Ghost, and that He may exercise His power upon those who use these spells to keep others from the faith, so that they may be awakened even by a shock. God can use you, He will strengthen and empower you, He will lift you up. He will transfigure you as S. Paul was transfigured, and will enable you to speak the word which will bring back the sun

The shock of the Great Man.

[1] *Comus.*

to him who seeks for it; for notice the tenderness even in the blow—it was "only for a season" that Elymas was to be without seeing the sun. The blindness which he tried to keep on his great man, was translated into that material blindness which he could understand. I earnestly entreat you to pray that some you know may have this shock of awakening; to pray that you may be filled with the Holy Ghost and learn to speak the truth; to pray for me that I may know how to speak to you. Christ will not, and does not, work except through His children, through His Church. You are the Church, you do believe this but do you *live* it? Are you going to bring the power of the Church to bear upon those who do not believe? Is it possible that the magic has some effect upon you so that it keeps even you blind or partly so? You say so yourselves. Everyone of you who is not trying to live this life of God is blind. You are told to pray and live by rule; not to begin your day by neglecting prayer, by looking over your letters before you have risen, directly your eyes are open to the world.

Who are the Church now? You—but you won't live it because a Magic keeps you blind.

Many such things that I would urge you to do, would be answered by saying, "I don't quite see it." You are told to live daily to God, to frequent Holy Communion, to pray for the whole week beforehand, to prepare yourself for the Holy Communion that Christ may come into your heart. "I do not see it." You are told to discipline yourselves to fast. You can't say the good is not there, but you "don't see it." The facts are real. He is there, ready to come and take possession of your hearts. Put upon yourself some restraint, strive to see if you are in earnest to learn a new lesson about yourself, try to remember in these forty days of Lent that Christ fasted, and that it must be possible for you therefore to fast; even if you are unable to do so owing to your health, are you intending to exercise some self-discipline? Look deep into your hearts and bring yourself to live by rule. Some fear that if they begin it, they may break through the rule; but if this is made an excuse it is because the mist is upon you. You are asked to read some book to find out what Christ would have you to do. You find it dull. Or

to make a study of the life of some holy person; and you find that dull, because you are in the mist. A year ago I entreated each of you to speak to someone, to be a witness. How many of you have spoken one word earnestly enough to have any effect? It is a mist and darkness which is upon you, and if you do not get cured of this mist, you must grow blind like Elymas; you will find it getting darker and darker, you will seek for someone to lead you by the hand—the first person who comes by you cling to. You cannot be sure that it will be an Apostle who will take you by the hand. In these days the person you cling to as a guide is as likely to be blind as you, and "If the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall" into the place where everything is so confounded that they will never find their way back?

XXIX.

Feb. 26th, 1890.

Christ and the Town.

Acts xiii. 13—52.

Care for others moves the Christians on to a Great Town.

First, they seek the most religious, educated, influential people (*vv.* 14, 16, 50).

Synagogue—Lessons of the Day (*vv.* 17, 27).

What came of that Sermon (*vv.* 42–51).

The Sermon itself.

(*a*) Continuity of Church History Antient (*vv.* 17–20), Modern (*vv.* 24–31).

(Comparison with our own.) There was no Modern History as yet of those events. They were legible in the Prophets, just as they came about.

(*b*) 36 The Ministry of great men is to their near contemporaries; that of Christ to all times alike.

(*c*) 38 He ministers to us what we must yearn for—Forgiveness and a Living Saviour.

The Hope of Antioch is the Hope of London—a Gospel of those two things—

18 'He suffers our manners' at present.

26 'To us was the word of this Salvation sent.'

41 'Despisers'—no interest in Divine handling; 'disappear.'

33 'To our Children.'

I should like to point out how much more useful these addresses would be made if you would carefully study beforehand the passage that we are going to read; if you would

study it with maps[1], understanding the route which the Apostles went, as they were driven forth by the love of men, bearing into the world Christ and the knowledge of Him. It is interesting to note that, at this point we have reached in Church History, two new names came into use—the splendid names of "Theophoros" and "Christopher"—"God-bearer," "Christ-bearer."

Care for others carrying [the Apostles] on.

xiii. *vv.* 13—15. "Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

The Rabbis were not priests but were well-educated men, well-taught, particularly in the Scriptures, and the priests had no special precedence in the synagogue; the only part specially reserved to them was the blessing which they gave when the synagogue was over. The women sat behind a lattice; in a niche in the wall was a small cupboard in which lay the rolls of the Law, which was written with such care and precision that if a mistake were made, the whole roll was often destroyed. These rolls were laid in an ark representing the Sacred Ark of the Temple.

To a Town—to the most religious persons first, educated laymen and the ladies of rank.

It is important to notice that the Apostles went first to the most cultivated and the most religious people[2]. They attended first their worship on the Sabbath. A great mistake is often made by our missionaries in this respect; they try first to convert the poorest and simplest; thus the educated heathen, who cannot value Christianity as the religion of the poor and needy, are apt to mistake it for the religion of the untaught and unthinking. The Apostles sat down as Rabbis. It was an old custom in the synagogue to reserve certain places for those who were ready to give instruction, therefore

[1] The Archbishop specially recommended the Variorum Bible (Eyre and Spottiswoode).

[2] Cf. p. 650.

the rulers of the synagogue sent them the customary invitation to speak.

v. 16. "And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said...."

The expression "Paul beckoned with the hand" does not mean the movement we understand by it, but the word (literally "shake down") signifies a gesture which commanded silence and attention[1]. In the synagogue, as with us, there were two proper lessons for each Sabbath in the year, one from the Law and the other from the Prophets, so that the whole of these were read during the year. On the forty-fourth Sabbath of the year, which fell in the latter part of the summer[2], the first lesson from the Law was the first chapter of Deuteronomy; and the second, from the Prophets, Isaiah i. We gather that it must have been this Sabbath, as S. Paul drew his sermon from these two chapters. His sermon is given in verses 17 to 41; and in verses 42 to 51 we are told what *came* of that sermon.

Lessons of the Day.

vv. 16—41. "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led He them forth out of it. And for about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: and after these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king; to whom also He bare witness, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought

[1] The Greek gesture, even in modern times, is well described by this word. "Beckoning" is a movement of the hand outward, as in warning, not towards one's person.

[2] This would agree with the general chronology of the Acts.

unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; when John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not He. But behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet asked they of Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead: and He was seen for many days of them that came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses unto the people. And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David. Because He saith also in another psalm, Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you."

In verse 17 where S. Paul uses the strange expression

"exalted" in his reference to the children of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, which we naturally consider a period of increasing degradation, he is quoting from the chapter of Isaiah, dwelling on their multiplication, on the power with which they were brought forth from the land of their bondage, rather as masters than slaves. In Isaiah i. 2 the expression is, "I have nourished and brought up children,"—or as the marginal reading of the Revised Version gives it, "made great and exalted,"—and the expression involves the idea of multiplication of the nation; whilst the expression, "with a *high arm* led He them forth," embodies the teaching of Deut. i., which Moses expresses elsewhere by saying that God bare the children of Israel as a father. Do not these correspondences form a beautiful underlying little bit of evidence for the genuineness of the whole?

This appeal on the part of S. Paul to his educated hearers in the synagogue, was, for the time, convincing; yet within a fortnight these very hearers, the Rabbis, who were persons of great influence, succeeded in making a reaction and expelled S. Paul and his companions from the city. The reaction was accomplished through the influence of the devout women. Women, as always in religious matters, were the first people to be attracted towards the new teaching, and they had used their influence upon the chief men of the city and their families; therefore their influence was necessary for opposing the new teaching; and thus the reaction for the moment is caused by the very persons to whom S. Paul first went. The influence of the chief men was necessary, because probably, as now, they had the key to the finances of the city, and these too the Rabbis enlisted against S. Paul.

You may find a difficulty in accounting for the interest taken by men of position in these poor strangers, who were working for their bread, and who were at once taken as skilled artisans because they were acquainted with the trade of the place. But it was part of a Jew's religion to honour work, and in every rank of life a man was trained to some craft in order that he might be able to maintain himself by it if occasion arose. Hillel, the greatest Rabbi among the Jews,

worked as a carpenter at Jerusalem. S. Paul was of good family of Tarsus, and had perhaps been to the University; but he had learnt for his trade to make the tent-canvas known as *cilicium*, which was one of the manufactures of Antioch in Pisidia.

There is a striking passage by W. Wilberforce[1] about the influence of women in Society; the language is already becoming quaint, but he puts forcibly the importance of the formation of Christian habits in the young, and especially in women on account of their natural inclination towards religion, and of the influence this gives them over men; he urges that they ought themselves to understand the greatness of their influence, and the power they possess of moulding the rising generation. He speaks of the necessity of forming habits which may assist our natural weakness, "to resist the temptations to which we shall be exposed.... This," he says, "is more especially affecting in the female sex because, by the very constitution of its nature, that sex seems to be more favourably disposed than ours to the feelings and offices of religion... When the husband should return to his family worn and harassed by worldly cares or professional labours, the wife... habitually preserving a warmer and more unimpaired spirit of devotion than is perhaps consistent with being immersed in the bustle of life might revive his languid piety, that the religious impressions of both might derive new force and tenderness from the animating sympathies of conjugal affection."

vv. 42—50. "And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. And the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and

[1] *A practical view of the prevailing religious system of professed Christians in the higher and middle classes in this country, contrasted with real Christianity.* By William Wilberforce, London, 1797, p. 434.

contradicted the things that were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. But the Jews urged on the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders."

What came of the Sermon in that town.

In the 42nd verse we see what came of the sermon.

Picture the close of the synagogue service; the hearers of the Apostles pouring out, as an Oriental crowd of to-day may be seen pouring out of a mosque, entreating for a renewal of the teaching. Throughout the week the teaching of the Apostles was followed up, and the next Sabbath was marked by a burst of success. But the Rabbis were roused to jealousy; as long as they thought that S. Paul was come to bring new life to Judaism, so long were they glad to receive him; but when they saw the multitudes who came to him, they were filled with jealousy lest loss of privilege and of being exclusively the elect people of God should befall them. They would rather lose the multitudes, than lose the privileges of the Jews. So they contradicted these teachings, blaspheming. Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly, "You reject for yourselves the offer of God through us. We have offered it to you first of all, now we turn to the Gentiles."

Burst of success.

Selfish reaction at loss of privilege.

Let us notice the feelings of the city; first the joy of the Gentiles, as many as "had arrayed themselves" for eternal life believed. The word expresses that they had fallen into rank, ready to march with the saved. Let me add that this word rendered "ordained" cannot be held to imply that terrible doctrine, held by some, of pre-condemnation.

Then mark the appearance of success; the flocking in of the Gentiles, the rapidity with which the message was spread in the country, the popularity among the Jews.

Then came the jealousy of the Jews; they made the women their friends. The leading men were brought in, and the movement ended in the expulsion and persecution of Paul and Barnabas. We see afterwards what bitter sufferings S. Paul had to go through; the cruel memory of them seems to cling to him. Then came the symbolic action, which the Lord commanded them to perform in such a case, removing the sandal to shake off the dust which collected between the sandal and foot—as if to say we have done our very utmost with you and take no further responsibility.

vv. 51, 52. "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost."

This looks like a failure, but no. The work was done. The seed had been sown, and the harvest was reaped by the Apostles. In *v.* 49 we read that "the word of the Lord was spread abroad," and the next time S. Paul comes to this very place we read of the "confirming of the churches[1]." God had seen that enough had been done by the Apostles. He left the rest to the chief men and honourable women; and more to the latter than to the former. Immediately after we can trace the work of "the women" in the discipleship of Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who believed. You will see that at Lystra S. Paul goes to the very same class.

The spread of the Gospel is effected by those who believe it; especially by their character.

There is food here for very serious reflections to women who are seeking the truth—that the work of the Church is to be done by the Church. The clergy are not the Church, but only officers of it; they have their office in praying, in visiting, in strengthening and in helping; but the duty of winning people to the faith devolves on all who believe. These men, Paul and Barnabas, held the shortest of missions, which ended in apparent failure; they were driven out of the city after one short fortnight's work, and yet when they

[1] ch. xv. 41.

returned years afterwards they found Churches to confirm, for their first hearers had handed the Word on to others.

The Force exercised by Christ on masses of men.

S. Athanasius teaches that the power of Christ exerted in the world, through the forces supplied by Him to Christians, is sufficient (as he sums it up) for:

Drawing men to religion.
Persuading them to virtue.
Teaching them to think of immortality.
Leading them to the desire of heavenly things.
Revealing the knowledge of the Father.
Inspiring power over death.
Shewing each man to himself[1].

That is the point of our self-examination. There is no power in the clergy of leading, drawing, or persuading, equal to the power which exists in women. What priest, bishop, or preacher could do these things more perfectly than they? There are none like women for seeing beyond death and encouraging people to face death.

Sermon—the Continuity of Church History.

S. Paul's sermon is divided into three parts: a slight sketch of antient history; a sketch of modern history; and passages from the Prophets shewing the continuity in antient and modern history of God's work.

(1) Antient.

Paul begins with God's choice of the Jewish nations; sketches their history under Moses in the desert; speaks of the expulsion of the seven evil nations that they might form their first constitution, irregular as it was, under the Judges and Samuel: then touches on the more regular constitution under their king. There must have been a slight touch of pride in Paul's reference to Saul, his tribe and family, for he himself was a descendant in the line of Benjamin, his own name the same as that of Israel's first king.

Here we have the only Biblical notice of the length of Saul's reign—forty years; this is confirmed by Josephus[2], but only a Jew would have known this chronology, which was traditional among the Jews. With the mention of David, S. Paul introduces the "Promise of the Son."

[1] Athanasius, *de Incarnatione*, *passim*, but chiefly LIV. [2] *Ant.* VI. 14. 9.

It was evidently the preacher's purpose to interest his hearers in the synagogue by an appeal to their national history. We English people are interested in our own, but it is strange to think how little Church people know about the history of their own Church. In different parts of the Canterbury diocese some very interesting lectures are being given on this subject, tracing the course of history much in the way that S. Paul does here, and shewing how the early Christians were driven into the Welsh hills and from that time the true faith has descended to us; on the coming of Augustine; how the seven kingdoms were moulded into one; how the Church was one with the nation; then how foreign tyranny of the Italian bishops over both Church and nation came in; and how we could not bear the yoke; and the old faith and freedom of England were restored.

Exactly so [with us]:—one unbroken story.

Saul and David, although imperfect in character, are brought into the sermon; does this mar the teaching? Do we shrink from mentioning Henry VIII. in connection with our Reformation or avoid reference to Cranmer because his strength was overshadowed by weakness?

A series of imperfect men with one high idea.

S. Paul awoke the attention of the Jews of Antioch by tracing God's plan through their antient history. He passed on then to the modern history of the Jews, 'the work in their days'; then to the mention of John the Baptist, whose teaching was known even as far as Ephesus, giving an additional word of his in the question, "What suppose ye that I am?" and he gives John's teaching about Jesus. Then S. Paul goes on to teach Christ's innocence; to tell of the combination of the Jewish rulers and of the Romans against Him; of the part Pilate (who must have died about this time) took in His death; and of His being taken down from the tree, His burial, and His appearances to them of Galilee.

(2) Modern. What was this modern history to them?

Mark how exactly S. Paul's account of all this corresponds with the Gospels; you read it as if it had been taken out of them, yet they were not written till long afterwards.

Two expressions in this sermon are peculiarly characteristic of S. Paul; "every one" and "justified" (*v.* 39). This is

the only verse in the Acts of the Apostles where the latter word occurs; but it is the key-note of S. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Here is a second coincidence of truth. S. Paul knew his hearers' need of forgiveness, of justification from all their sins; their need, not in their own eyes, but in the sight of God. So he ministered to them the Living Saviour; he tells them of Christ, His life and death, His living presence. Their need is ours. Let us confess that S. Paul, and so Christ, knew human nature and us. If we think of death and of life and of what is before us, we long for forgiveness, we long to have One who is divine, in perfect sympathy with us, always ready to speak to us and to be spoken to. S. Paul spoke by the inspiration which revealed to him the need of mankind: we are all longing for more knowledge of God than we have; we suffer from a need for God which remains unsatisfied because our minds are not fully made up to go to Him; the going involves a sacrifice which we cannot resolve to make. The need and the hope of Antioch are the need and the hope of England—forgiveness and a living Lord. We know the state of society and the state of things in the very class among whom we live, and that He "suffers our manners" now as He did the manners of the people of Israel in the wilderness for a time.

The lofty contrast between the greatest man's ministry to his contemporaries, and Christ's to every age.

He ministers what we all want and yearn for—unless we are so wretched that we want nothing but the sort of things we have—Forgiveness and a Living Inspiration.

The Hope of Antioch is the Hope of London—

(1) "He suffers our manners" just now.

"Behold, ye despisers." There are many who would not enter into the divine promise—many in London, and they must "behold." The doom pronounced by S. Paul against those who 'behold' without accepting is that they pass out of reach of Life—they pass out of the presence of what it is worth while to live for. Who can help those who judge themselves unworthy of Life?

(2) "To us was the word of this Salvation sent."

(3) "Despisers"—they disappear.

In verse 33, S. Paul implies that those who repudiate the gift of life for themselves will not always repudiate it for their children; "fulfilled...unto our children" is a tender touch. And it is striking that among us, leading infidels sometimes send away their children from their own influence. Mothers are sometimes heard to lament that they cannot teach as they were taught—so many difficulties surround their faith; they vainly regret that they cannot teach the old truths and know

(4) "To our children"—tender touch.

not what else to teach. Yet according to S. Paul's teaching, the children shall have the heritage.

And I would impress upon all the great importance of a mother teaching religion to her children herself, not leaving them to learn at the Children's services. The old way of daily readings with the mother was far better; the simple prayer learnt at her knee, the few words of the daily text, remain in the mind till life's end. There are so many associations wrapped up with this mother's reading. Ruskin bears witness to the help he found from the Scripture lessons of his mother. A blind old saint answered the sympathy shewn for his inability to read the Bible, or to remember much of what was read to him, by saying, "I thank my blessed mother for her teaching; what I learned from her I have never forgotten." Do not fear your knowledge is too small, or your powers of expression too weak. Read Wilberforce's opinion of God's great gift to women, that they more easily converse with the unseen, and of the power for good which they can possess over their children. I would entreat you all to use that influence to gain your families for God.

XXX.

March 5th, 1890.

Christ and Country Places.

Acts xiii. 52—xiv. 23.

1–7. Boldness and Retreat.

10. Heathen Faith springs to the touch.

8–18. Deep country life—its traditions, its stolidness, its emotion. The fête and the stoning.
(perfect classical "cameo.")

15–17. The Village Sermon and Text.
Modern bearings of Village Life on National Life.
Worth while to care for it. Sense of "*Living* God."

19–20. Suffering—its adaptation—its Fruit.

21–28. The return—scarred, broken, and triumphant.

xiii. 52—xiv. 7. "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles. And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to entreat them shamefully, and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia,

Boldness a success.

Flight required great faith.

Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached the gospel."

We read last time and again in these verses of how the Apostles were pursued, and of the onset made upon them for preaching the Gospel. Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly in Iconium, with their full heart; they were full of courage, and the Lord was with them, bearing witness to His Cross, allowing wonderful things to be done by them, and everything was going on prosperously. But divisions began to form between the Jewish and the Apostolic parties. Some of the Gentiles sided with the Jews, and the Apostles were driven away. Were they wanting in courage because they fled?—the Lord had given them much blessing on their teaching, yet directly the onset was made, away they fled. I think we shall find that it was often harder for them to flee than to stop, and we should notice their exact obedience to the method which Christ had prescribed, "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another[1]." It was not the purpose of Christ that the preaching of His Gospel should be put an end to. Their object was to spread His Gospel; they leave the new principle they have planted in one city to work, and they pass on to another. The object of Christ's command was not that they should go where they could find rest, but that they should spread the Gospel. S. Paul says that he knew in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him[2]. The enemies of Christianity have commented on the same sort of incident in S. Cyprian's life: he left Carthage in the beginning of the persecution of Decius; but he went to no great distance, and from his retreat he managed to quiet the fears of the Christian community and to keep up their courage far better than if he had been among them and drawn down the wrath of the magistrates upon them. A very few years later he willingly gave himself up to the sword; for he had waited God's time and his work was done. So it was with S. Paul.

The passage that follows is one of those which were most interesting to us as children, made known to us perhaps from our earliest years by the glorious cartoon of Raphael.

[1] Matt. x. 23. [2] ch. xx. 23.

The Deep Country Life. "Wolfland."

We have dealt with the town preaching and come to the preaching in country places. Lycaonia was a heathen land, a high land, almost separated from civilization by the great range of Mount Taurus. In leaving Seleucia and going into the "Wolfland"—as the name signifies—Paul and Barnabas were giving up the protection of Roman law and civilization. It was a great, treeless plain, with very little fresh water, or running streams, but with salt pools; Lystra was forty miles from Lycaonia and Derbe twenty miles further; it was an unpromising country; brigandage prevailed in the region, there was no synagogue, but unsophisticated heathenism, and stolid country people.

Up came the Jews from the country as soon as there was any mischief to do, for you must remember that the Jewish nation was beginning to awaken to great energy and animosity. They had the protection of the Roman law: the statesman-like quality of the Romans was shewn in their power of moulding other nations into their own civilization, not taking away their religion unless there were things in it dangerous to the State, and the Jewish religion was licensed by them; on the spread of Christianity amongst the Jews the Romans even went so far as to consult the Jews as to whether Christianity should be tolerated or not. The Jews were in a position to represent to the Romans that Christianity was a dangerous, unlawful sect springing up, and the persecution thus arose[1].

vv. 8—14. "And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacri-

[1] Cf. p. 441.

fice with the multitudes. But when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying—"

The hand of the physician shews here in the full explanation of the condition of the lame man; he had always been lame, had never walked. "Fastening his eyes"—this was evidently characteristic of S. Paul. "Seeing that he *had faith* to be healed." Is it not striking to see that this heathen man had faith to be healed? S. Paul saw that faith springing up in him. One must observe not only the miracles that were done, but the things that were *not* done miraculously.

Notice that this passage shews we are right in our view of the Gift of Tongues; it was not a perpetual gift which enabled the Apostles to understand the languages of every country[1]; but was only granted for a particular time or occasion. For it is evident (*vv.* 11—14) that S. Paul and his companion did not understand what was said, they did not exclaim against the pronouncement of the people, but when, seeing the sacrifices being brought, they understood what was going on they rent their garments, and ran in among the people to stop and disperse them. God does not give miraculous power to be used unnecessarily according to the fancy of men, but He gives it for His own purpose, and in measure; God who gave Paul and Barnabas the power to heal, did not give them the unnecessary power to understand the language of any country they went into.

Amongst these people in the darkness of lawlessness and superstition, there is one man, the cripple, who feels the presence of a living God which makes him ready to attempt what God's messenger bids him do.

All the way strewn with tokens of truth.

There are tokens of truth all throughout this narrative. It harmonises with what S. Paul tells us elsewhere of his personal appearance. He took the lead in speaking, and though we look upon him as far greater than Barnabas, the people did not think so at first. Barnabas' manner gave them a superior idea of him; and they thought S. Paul was his attendant. Nowhere, when the preaching is among civilised,

[1] Cf. pp. 26, 153.

sceptical people, is there any tendency to say that these miracles of the Apostles were done by gods; but in Melita where the people were again "barbarian" the instant interpretation of the harmlessness of the viper, was that Paul "must be a god." Here they say 'the gods are come down, one is Zeus, one Mercurius.'

Wolfland. Its traditions, its stolid certainties, its emotion.

There is not in the history of the Acts a hint of why they should have imagined there was an embodiment of gods among them, but we know through Ovid[1] that this region had a legend of its own, a beautiful mythological tale about Jupiter and Mercury. Ovid describes a city of Phrygia, evidently this Lystra; how it was on a plain, and the lofty hills were close to the city; on the walls of the city stood a little temple, and outside the temple grew a lime-tree and an oak-tree. He minutely and beautifully describes the trees surrounded by a little wall and gives their history. These two gods came down from Heaven and went from house to house seeking a night's shelter, but everyone refused it till they came to a cottage belonging to an old farmer and his wife, and they, who had nothing to give, gave them their all, entertained them, made them welcome, gave them lodging and waited upon them; and because of their hospitality, Jupiter and Mercury, who had come to drown all the rest of the country for its sin and had tested its inhospitality, took the old couple up on a hill and made them look back on the plain; it was now covered with water and had become a great lake, and they saw their own little cottage was turned into a temple. The gods asked them what they most desired, and they asked to be made priest and priestess of the temple, that they might live together. They further asked that they might die together, for neither could bear the thought of seeing the other depart. Their prayer was granted, and when they came to extreme old age they were turned into a lime-tree and oak-tree, still embracing each other. A little wall was thrown round the two trees to keep them from profanation.

Tale of Philemon and Baucis.

Wonderful cameo of Classical life.

The description given in the Acts always seems to me to be the most perfect classical scene we can imagine. These

[1] Ovid, *Met.* VIII., 626—724.

heathens who had been undisturbed for so long were convinced that the antient gods of the legend had come to visit them again, and they brought oxen and garlands, those garlands which you see carved upon the temples with which they wreathed the horns of the beasts to be sacrificed. And there is another little touch of truth; the ritual is truly described, for bulls were the creatures offered to Jupiter and Mercury. All this is perfectly caught by Raphael, at the very time of the new explorations which were bringing to light antient representations of the old scenes, and the instruments used; Raphael delighted in representing such things—the double pipe, the incense box—with fidelity. His picture seems to bring forward the most perfect and classic scene, it is the meeting point between Christ and the old classical religion.

vv. 15—18. "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them."

The Sermon—in the very hour of their service and their homage. Preaching with rent mantles.

Let us turn to the village Sermon and the Text; what a time it was for a sermon to be preached by men with their garments rent, in the very hour of that service in which they themselves were the object of homage. The sermon is very short, and they began it by putting themselves in perfect sympathy with their hearers; "We also are men of like passions with you." Remember how the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that "we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin[1]."

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

"Turn from these vain things"—and what were they? The best these poor people knew of.

Here is a little village turning out all the treasures accumulated for centuries in its temples, bringing oxen and garlands and doing the utmost honour to them, and yet the Apostles speak of turning from "these vain things," to the God who made all things, "the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that in them is," who gave "rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness."

Country Text, Rain; Autumn, Plenty; all witness.

Preparatio Evangelica.

What a country text, telling of rains and plenty; it is enough to begin with to lead up to Christ. God sent all His witnesses amongst you, and you have taken up these fantastic tales and fables in which you are lost. The rain and summer fruits are sufficient to tell you that God lives and that His love is with you.

v. 16. "Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways."

See the tenderness of this verse, which is brought out more clearly if we compare it with the sermon of S. Paul at Athens[1]. "He is not far from each one of us"..."as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring." "The times of this ignorance God winked at."

This answers the question of many a tender heart—how God deals with those who have never known Christ. A certain set of Christians have taught that all are lost who know not Christ nor how God has revealed Himself. S. Paul tells us differently. God allowed the nations to walk in their own ways that they might find out the evil from the good, and in Romans ii. 6, S. Paul tells us of the righteous judgment of God, who will "render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life;" and again (xi. 32) he says how God had included all in unbelief, both the Jew transgressing against the Law and the Gentile against his conscience, "that He might have mercy upon all."

God gave two preparations to the antient world—the preparation of the Law, and the preparation of Conscience,

[1] ch. xvii. 27–30.

and left them to develope. Some of the antient Fathers tell us that through the philosophy of the Greeks the preparation for the Gospel was being worked out in one direction, and in another, among the Jews, by the Law. Both shewed that man must perish except he be at unity with God. The Incarnation of God and the union of God's nature with Man's nature tended to the one point. The Apostles pointed out to these men in the midst of their homage the emptiness and vanity of the state of things in which they lived, for they lacked the knowledge of the Living God. S. Paul gave it to them.

vv. 19, 20. "But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe."

The Jews again; tremendous opposition to popularising privilege.

What was it that the Jews persuaded the people to believe? These poor heathen folk would come to this conclusion if they went on reasoning in their heathen way, "We have seen this wonderful thing done by these people, but they tell us they are not gods; they must be sorcerers or demons then!" Then up came the Jews who would teach the very same thing; they had once said of our Lord, "He casteth out demons by Beelzebub the prince of demons[1]." The Jews hit the exact moment when the people would be questioning themselves as to what the agency could be which was not a divine agency; and they came to the conclusion that these men had been teaching blasphemy and doing dishonour to their gods; they therefore began to stone them for the sin of blasphemy.

What was the end of it? After the glorious reception of the morning when they had been welcomed as gods they ran counter to the feelings of the people and the next day they were lying outside the city, mangled, bruised and bleeding, Paul himself left as dead. There were a few, whose hearts had been touched by his teaching, who stood round con-

[1] Matt. xii. 24. The word is "demons," not "devils."

sidering whether they might dare to help. But as they stood there he rose up, and went away to Derbe. Yet when he returned to this city he found the Gospel had been doing its work for there were many souls waiting to be confirmed.

Strange correspondence between early sowing and late harvesting.

What did S. Paul think about when the stones began to rain upon him? About Stephen? And in the same way as S. Paul himself was awakened by the death of Stephen a young man and his mother were awakened by seeing Paul stoned[1]. Is this not a strange correspondence such as we often find in life? How often we find that those sins which have been completely forgiven, bring in old age a punishment which bears some distinct reference to the sin of youth. God lets men feel that He has been dealing with them all along, and at last puts His seal upon them thus lest they should think they have reformed themselves. In the history of Elijah when the woman asked the Prophet, "Art thou come unto me to bring my sin to remembrance[2]?" she evidently refers to some sin of her youth; so too David is told, even after his repentance, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die[3]," but still in order that there shall be no mistake as to what God's judgment is of the sin against family sanctity, David's family gave him one sorrow after another, till the evil of his own family brings his grey hair with sorrow to the grave. But what a consolation it is that sufferings borne voluntarily for God will be rewarded by the working out of that for which the suffering is borne. Father Damien who dies for the lepers, brings the sympathy of half the world to lepers for the future. The man who sacrifices his own life to Christ and lives for Christ, knows that in the love of God sufferings, even if they are punishments for sin, are allowed to bring in blessed fruit when they are borne with meekness and with holiness. S. Paul could not have gone through that stoning without the thought that the God who loved him, his All in All, was teaching him in remembrance of his old sin.

Sufferings, even if punishments, are allowed to work great things.

vv. 21—23. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra,

[1] Cf. Address XXXII. p. 362. [2] 1 Ki. xvii. 18.
[3] 2 Sa. xii. 13.

and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed."

Sacrifice and Summer had been the text—now suffering.

Consider their return. To remove the stumbling-block that some might find in these sufferings allowed by God to attend his servant, S. Paul says to the Christian brethren, 'Some day you will know why it is the will of God that we must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God.' He adds with joy and pride in one of his Epistles, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus[1]." So he actually confirmed the Churches with the marks of his passion upon him—all the sufferings he had endured. He has new power through being touched with the feeling of the old sin.

So that they confirmed Churches by it.

Let us turn to your own country work[2].—We ought to consider in these times perhaps more than in old times, the bearing of country life upon national life, the importance of country houses to the whole country. Think what a wonderful influence a country house may be for good, if they who have to rule it know how to rule it for good, and have the good of the country at heart. But now our country houses have assumed quite a different character from what they had a century ago. Many a country house has been touched and shaken in these days; they have no longer the same individuality about them. Our labourers are leaving the country places for towns and for the colonies, to found a new England for themselves. Draw a line, radiate it over the globe and you find New England everywhere, and you find there the most clever, the most enterprising and the most energetic of the country people, who go and leave the less energetic at home; so more is wanted now, than ever in times past, if the country places are to keep their importance, their strong influence upon national life. And if there springs up a dislike to leading people, to the landlords in any country place, how rapidly it acts and produces opinions and feeling which we

Bearing of Country Life on National Life.

[1] Gal. vi. 17. [2] Cf. p. 344, etc.

cannot but dread, which we must at any rate study carefully, and which should make us exercise the greatest discretion in action. For the people left behind at home are more stolid, with less love and loyalty to the country house, less friendly to the Church. They suffer when the country houses are shut up for a long time, and the tie to them becomes less strong. I know many of you are obliged to come to town, but how many follow in your wake simply because they like a fashionable manner of living; so the country is left to itself.

Old Houses and Churches and Traditions: work them.

There are many people who would be far more important people, who would have considerable influence if they would stay at home, and who are not called upon to come to town. I think this is a matter for people in your position to think about. I always impress upon the young clergy who come full of zeal for work in East London, or in some large town, that there is scope for the white heat of energy in the work of one simple country village, where the people may be brought to see the value of water, to care for their children, to learn to train them in good habits and in sound English Church habits. They cannot find a finer task in streets crowded with people, which must indeed be attended to, but upon which they can make little impression.

But why is it that the country houses are losing ground? How for instance are Sundays spent at them, and what effect does it have if the guests in a country house are amusing themselves while the village folk are flocking to church? The country people see nothing but the worst side of the matter. What is the social effect if the house is not looked upon as the pattern of good life, if those who live in it take no interest in the education of the young, if it is well known, as it will be, through the servants that the family never receive Communion or go to church in town, though they may come to church in the country? It is impossible that a country house can be a place of amusement and enjoyment, apart from any sense of religion, without its having a most injurious effect.

What those people want is the

These people need your help, your kindness; what they want is what S. Paul told the people of Lystra they wanted—

the Living God. He told them that God was living as we are living, only so much the more, as God is greater than man. They need to be told that God looks after them, touches them, cares for them ; that the Son lives to make intercession for them ; that every hair of their heads is numbered ; that it is God who sends them the rain and the fruit of the earth.

"Living God." Paul told that to them.

So S. Paul taught and suffered. Bruised, battered and broken, he came back to those cities as a well-known ship may come back out of battle, its masts broken, its timbers splintered, sailing gloriously among the cheers of thousands of the population, into the harbour, welcomed with joy because they know what it has done for them. He came back scarred but triumphant.

Hence when they came back to Antioch from whence they had been "committed" they came scarred, broken, triumphant.

XXXI.

March 12th, 1890.

Christ from Centres.

Acts xiv. 23—xv. 12.

God's way of work in all regions we know: nature; civil life; religion.

23. For each City "Presbyters" as a Centre. 'Bishop.'

Antioch a secondary Centre, xiii., 1.—a chapter.
("Door of Faith" 27.)

xv. 2. Jerusalem the Centre.

Note the carefulness of organisation in the phrases 'Apostles and Elders'—'Church, Apostles and Elders'—23. Apostles and Elders, brethren.

xv. 1. The Controversy.

(*a*) 'The Everlasting Covenant.' The position of Israel.

(*b*) The Sufficiency of Christ.

xv. 6. The First of the 'Councils of the Church.' The 'Council of Jerusalem.'

7. Peter first speaker—not chief authority—not again in Acts. First to abjure ritual supremacy; to rely on "the Faith" and "the Grace" "Purifying the hearts."

12. Report of Paul and Barnabas.

Centres. Religious—a universal Order for all Nations; no caste.

Church centres, old and new.

Other Social centres: Town and Country.

The Forces from all these centres.

The yearning inquiry, which Benevolence is not sufficient to answer. Is there a spiritual power *now* in the world? or *was* there two thousand years ago, not now?

xiv. 23—26. "And when they had appointed for them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled."

Perga.—It has not been stated that they preached there before. This Antioch is the great Antioch on the river Orontes, in Syria. So having returned to their starting-point, in a few quiet words they give a very natural summary of what God had done by them and for them in their tour.

vv. 27, 28. "And when they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that He had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples."

Antioch had become a kind of secondary centre, Jerusalem being the chief centre. You will remember that a congregation had formed itself at Antioch (xiii. 1), amongst whom there were many leading men; and its prophets and teachers had formed a kind of chapter at Antioch in connection with the original centre of Jerusalem; Paul and Barnabas had been ordained by the chapter at Antioch and had gone out as missioners. They had gone through wonderful adventures; wonderful blessings, wonderful sufferings accompanied them. They had left Presbyters in every Church, and now they came back into residence and tarried some time.

Chapter going back into residence.

In passing, let us notice the expression "a door of faith." We are so accustomed to it that we do not remember it was a favourite expression of S. Paul's. In his letters he uses it no less than three times. 1 Cor. xvi. 9: "A great door and effectual

Door of Faith. Paul's phrase.

is opened unto me"—that is access to the palace or city of Ephesus, where Paul meant to tarry until he took possession. 2 Cor. ii. 12: "Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit because I found not Titus my brother." Paul could not work without Titus; he heard he was ill and so went off to Macedonia, where he found him recovered. Again, he implores the Colossians also (iv. 3) to continue steadfast in prayer, "withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word"; lamenting thus that there is no door by which he may get in, and saying as it were, 'Pray for me that I may find the chamber of their hearts.'

This 27th verse we should put in inverted commas, for the writer cannot help using the very words of S. Paul; as also the 22nd verse of this chapter, where he says, "through many tribulations *we* must enter into the kingdom of God"; "*we*" not "you" only; every clause bristles with indications of truth and reality as we see how these accounts agree and confirm each other.

The Earliest Church Council

Now begins a great event in Church history. If any time in particular can be called foremost, it is this, marking as it does the first gathering together of a Council in Jerusalem to decide an important question.

xv. 1, 2. "And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question."

Picture to yourself Antioch in the North and Jerusalem in the South, and these men coming from the fountain from which the Gospel had flowed out to the secondary centre, to Antioch, saying, 'Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved.' This doctrine fell like a bomb-shell into the Church at Antioch.

Certain people were called together and decided to send some among themselves up to the chief centre at Jerusalem

to argue the question out and have it settled. Notice the wisdom of cutting short the dispute at Antioch and referring at once to Jerusalem. You will see a little later on that these people who came from Jerusalem professed to represent the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem in an authoritative way, and that the true elders there did not believe their doctrine.

v. 3. "They therefore, being brought on their way by the Church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."

On their way to Jerusalem they pass through two regions where they find many converted Christians. We have no explanation of how these people had become Christian, except in two or three references to Philip's work in these regions. It was at Caesarea you will remember that we last heard of Philip, after his preaching to the eunuch near Gaza, and after his work at Samaria, where he baptized many who waited for Peter and James to come down and confirm them[1].

vv. 4, 5. "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church and the Apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."

In *v.* 2 we read that the deputation was sent to the Apostles and elders; here we read that they were received by the *Church* and by the Apostles and elders. Then the Apostles and elders gathered together to consider this matter. This is the first Church Council, and for many ages doctrines were formulated and the Church was governed by Councils, modelled after this Church Council at Jerusalem.

After long discussion Peter rose up and was heard in silence, then Paul and Barnabas spoke, and finally James answered.

vv. 6—13. "And the Apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

[1] Ch. viii.

Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they. And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

James advised that the "canons" of the Council should be published and sent out to the world wherever there were any Christians; they were written in the form of a letter beginning in *v.* 23. In the next verse you will see that he declares that those men who went to Antioch professing to have been sent by the Apostles and elders of Jerusalem, had received no commandment. In *v.* 30 we have the account of how the delegates come down and deliver the epistle.

God's way of working from Centres —universal so far as we know.

The Church has grown wonderfully in these few verses, it has burst out into great organizations, and it has formed the centres which we shall take for our principal subject to-day.

Let me explain the meaning of this. If you watch a still pool freezing, you will see on the surface of the smooth water a number of little points forming themselves, and little needles radiating from each of these points all over the surface of the pool, till their crystallizations form a thin web; then the still water between these interlacing needles itself forms little needles, and crystallizes until the whole is covered with a delicate film. When you have thought about this, you will see the way in which God seems to work in every origination that we can know anything about. Christ says, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work[1]"; and in this

[1] Jo. v. 17.

same way God works in all nature. And all we know about all life and nature thus shews the same principle of formation; everything works from a centre. Plants spread thus from centres; the beautiful tribe of heaths for instance seem to have their origin in South Africa, and they radiate their different species in all climates, but they seem to have one origin; so it is with other plants, with animals, with mankind; so it is with the nations of the world.

When we survey the heavens with the telescope, all we can know points in this same direction; the solar system, the balance and preservation of poise of our own earth, are all due to a central force. All spring from some central origin and work by the operation of central force. If we turn to social and civil centres, we find the same thing; how our own nation is radiating from one centre all over the world and forming a greater Britain everywhere, in the very same way in which it was itself formed, by the conquests of small tribes spreading from their one centre.

Religion from persons, then from places.

So it is with the religions, not only of our Lord Jesus Christ, but of Buddha and of Mohammed, which have spread from some central personality.

And now we see this principle of growth in the Church; the Church is taking its place in the world and forming centres for further development.

Presbyters in each city.

When the Apostles finished their first tour they placed presbyters in every city, and these Churches formed centres of activity; and on their return from their journey the Apostles confirmed the disciples. These presbyters were like the Jewish elders in the synagogue; the word has been shortened into "priest" but the antient meaning of "presbyter" was "elder." Every city was set at work diffusing the knowledge of Christ in the country round. And in that district now there is one city, Iconium, called "the thousand churches," from the vast number of ruined churches left from the desolation of the Turks.

Apostles above them while living:

The Apostles had the government, the presbyters ranking under them; from amongst the presbyters there came bishops as the Apostles died. In the Epistle to the Philippians

commend new Churches to God, and leave them.

S. Paul sends greeting to the "bishops and deacons[1]." Below the presbyters were the deacons. Note with what care Paul and Barnabas chose the men who were to be presbyters, "with prayer," and with fasting,—in order that the prayer might be more concentrated, more absorbed, more devoted—they "commend them to the Lord on whom they had believed."

Antioch a secondary centre.

You see that Antioch is only a secondary centre, for the Church there does not feel able to decide such an important question as the necessity of circumcision without appealing to the chief centre—Jerusalem. Notice the points which give distinctness to the early organization of the Church; Paul and Barnabas and others were appointed to go up to "the Apostles and elders." In the fourth verse we read they were received of the "Church and the Apostles and the elders," and in the twenty-second verse we read of a resolution arrived at by the "whole Church"; but those who formulate the doctrine and come to the determination of the difficulty are the Apostles and elders only (*v.* 6)[2].

Jerusalem the Centre.

They go up to Apostles and Elders.

Received by Ecclesia, Apostles and Elders.

Assembly of Apostles and Elders.

Apostles and Elders and whole Church choose men.

Now for a little bit of criticism.—We have in our old Version and in many MSS. something which would seem to make those expressions of no great value or accuracy, for verse 23 reads "Apostles *and elders and brethren*" as if the whole Church formulated the doctrine. But in the revised edition, you have the reading of the best and most antient genuine MSS., where "and" is omitted, and therefore the passage runs "the Apostles *and elder brethren.*"

The *δόγματα* were *κεκριμένα* by the Apostles and Elders.

The Controversy—Everlasting Covenant.

The controversy—What was to be said for that? It seems to us at first so strange and so monstrous, we can only consider it as a worldly kind of policy; but it is not so unintelligible, if you think how long it is before the whole truth dawns on people. Consider what the Jews thought of circumcision. It was given to Abraham as an "Everlasting Covenant[3]," it was to be a token between God and man of this covenant, and a witness of God against sin. It was the

[1] Phil. i. 1; cf. Tit. i. 7 etc.

[2] The multitudes were listening, *v.* 12.

[3] Gen. xvii. 7.

Jews' antient symbol of purity, of their faith, and a sign that they were the chosen people. It was a long time before they could get rid of the impression that whatever happened, Jerusalem was to be the head, the chosen city of the chosen nation. If the whole world became Christian, still the covenant would stand, and Jerusalem not lose its position.

Spiritual Supremacy of Abraham's race.

It is impossible for us to imagine what would have happened if Israel had been faithful, if instead of setting on the Romans to exterminate the Christians, they had welcomed Christ as their King, as Zechariah saw them receiving Him, and rejoicing with shouts of Hosanna[1]; if 'the stones had cried out[2],' and if those words had not been true that He "came unto His own and His own received Him not[3]." Supposing the Jews *had* received Him what might not the course of history have been? But Jerusalem was to be trodden down of nations, as we now see it trodden down, until the Gentiles had accomplished all things meant for them to accomplish, until they had become incorporated in the body and filled with the life of Christ. This was a vision of pain to S. John[4], and S. Paul exclaims in the Epistle to the Romans, "Did God cast off His people? God forbid[5]." But they had forfeited their place, their privileges were suspended for a time; they were to look forward to a time of restitution which would come in God's own way. S. Paul clearly looks forward to the time when the Jews will be a nation again. "If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead[6]?"

Overthrow of whole work of Paul by this doctrine of work of Christ:

At this moment many of the Apostles were living at Jerusalem, but many of the elders who were joining with them in the council had not seen anything of the work among the Gentiles. So it was not wonderful that they could not understand that the old Covenant between God and themselves was to be forgotten and cast aside. Their view was 'we cannot admit these heathens into His body unless they enter under His promise.'

[1] Zech. ix. 9. [2] Lu. xix. 40. [3] Jo. i. 11.
[4] Rev. xi. 2. [5] Ro. xi. 1. [6] Ro. xi. 15.

if circumcision necessary, then Faith in Christ not enough.

But the advocates of the other view urge: if circumcision is still necessary to make these men members of the Church, then the work of Christ is not sufficient; Christ's salvation is not perfect. You will remember that the Epistle to the Galatians is devoted to this subject, 'if circumcision is necessary, then Christ has died in vain,—He has not been a Saviour sent by God, He is not a living Lord.' To impose the Jewish rite upon the Gentiles was to declare that Christ was not sufficient for them. Circumcision need not be taken away from the Jews, but it should not be imposed on the Gentiles. This is the difference between the true Gospel taught by S. Paul and that Gospel which he says was "anathema[1]." If this new doctrine was true, then faith in Christ was not enough.

Peter. His had been the first call to the Gentile world.

Experience of past and present makes him foremost to abjure ritual supremacy and to use "the Faith" and "the Grace" as the means of "saving the nations."

Notice S. Peter's position; he is not the chief authority, although he is the first speaker. He gives his own experience; he had been sent ten or twelve years before to convert Cornelius the Gentile, and was the first to bring Gentiles into the Church. On this point therefore he is an authority and thus speaks first. What glorious few words they are. 'God, which knoweth the heart, gave them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us.' The only other place in the New Testament where this word, 'the heart-knower,' occurs it is used by S. Peter[2]. S. Peter declares his opinion that God cleanses hearts by faith and had accepted these people apart from the antient covenant. 'God put no difference between them and us.' It was right God should impose this yoke upon themselves to shew to the heathen world what they were willing to go through for God, but it had been a severe yoke. 'Why put a yoke on them which *we* could not bear? My personal experience leads me to think that not a word should be said to the Gentiles about this covenant; they are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ even as we are.' The distinction was done away. In the Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 14) S. Paul speaks of Christ 'making both one, and

[1] Gal. i. 8.

[2] The prayer presumably used by S. Peter, before the casting of lots. Acts i. 24.

breaking down the middle wall of partition.' Nothing, perhaps, makes us feel more our oneness with the whole old history of the Church than the way in which we can put ourselves back in this Council room at Jerusalem.

After S. Peter's speech we have the report of Paul and Barnabas on their work, and then S. James, the bishop of Jerusalem, rises and his declaration rules the question; it is he, not S. Peter, who speaks with authority. Notice also that this is the last that we hear of S. Peter in the Acts; what bold words for his last, "saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus."

This is the last of Peter in the Acts, and here he is not chief certainly.

How does such study of the centres of Christianity affect us? I do not want to speak much about Apostolic Succession, but it is a fact that this system of appointing presbyters has gone on from then till now. Apostolic Succession is not a doctrine, but an historical fact. From the beginning there have been bishops, priests and deacons; and they have only been accepted by the laying on of hands in the manner described here. No special family has been selected, no special caste like the tribe of Levi, there was no more hereditary priesthood. Jesus Christ is the High Priest for ever.

Centres: Religious, Apostolic: a universal order for all nations.

This organization presently became diocesan, then parishes were formed, and the same system is, in its vigour, with us now. Our Saxon ancestry marked out certain districts into dioceses, and the estates into parishes, great and small; this accounts for the irregularity of the size of parishes, for they represent the old divisions of the land long before the Norman Conquest. The owner of an estate often built a church and gave a piece of his estate for the glebe to sustain the priest, and a tenth part or tithe of his produce for the maintenance of the church. This principle of division has gone on ever since.

Early Diocesan, later still Parochial.

National with us before the Conquest.

But other social centres spring up. The country house is an antient, national and thoroughly English institution, and how important it is as a centre for village life. The names still mark the original function—the old "Hall" where the poor received food, protection, employment; or the "Court"

Other social centres which spring out of National Life. Country House.

where the Lord of the Manor heard cases and decided them. We come short of our inheritance if we fail to realize how near a relation the "Hall" or "Court" or "Grange" bears to the people and the charge that is laid upon them. Think of the mischief worked among all from a bad country house. But can anything be a greater engine for good than the country house where the father, mother, sons and daughters feel their responsibility to the village, set aside land for the recreation of the people, help in starting a club, where thrift and temperance are promoted, schools helped, and the sick cared for? Such a house must be one where the Spirit of God dwells, that same Spirit which "with mighty wings outspread dove-like" sat "brooding on the vast abyss[1]," before the creation of the world. Such a house may be one of the grandest powers in life. What would parishes, what would England be without country houses? We read accounts of mission work, and note the change wrought steadily month by month and year by year, not by men of genius, but by people who are in earnest in their work. Let us ask ourselves, as men and women of the world who must look at *facts*: do our country houses encourage, in little cottages, in houses and farms round them this same missionary spirit which spreads love and joy from one village to another, such as Paul and Barnabas found as they passed through cities and villages declaring the conversion of the heathen? The country house could help to make the services of the Church beautiful, without interfering with the position of the clergy. There are few places where the clergy can be helped to carry out their own plans. Let us consider this and consult how clergy and laity can work together in the Church[2].

Cathedral of our Diocese.

Then we ought to consider the Cathedral the centre of our county, a secondary centre, as Antioch was. In the old time, the old cathedral body, forty or more sometimes, was a centre of work in the diocese. Canterbury was the first of such centres in England. Of old these were called the Mother Churches—let us keep them as living instruments.

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I. l. 20.

[2] Cf. p. 331, etc.

The Town House.

Then the town house must be a centre somehow. How difficult! the time is cut up so much, even for earnest people, by ceaseless engagements of work and of pleasure-seeking. Yet by these very means great numbers of people are brought in your service from the East end to the West end. The Commission on the Sweating System has brought to light terrible contrasts between the rooms where the garments worn by many of you are made, and the luxurious homes to which these clothes are sent. The wonder is how such neglected starved bodies, and overworked eyes, can turn out such work; how people living in this way can have sufficient intelligence to carry out these intricate patterns. Compare the beauty of these works and their wearers with the homes of the workers. You do not mean to crush these people, but surely you have some duties towards them. You cannot simply resort to traders who care nothing for the welfare of those whom they employ.

What duties arise out of the town house? You must remember that you bring all these people about you; some time, some thought, some trouble is due to them. You cannot care for them less than for the animals in your stalls. How is this to be done? You must think out the way. There is a great deal of scepticism and doubt among the upper classes. But there is far more among the lower classes, who have facts staring them in the face, and to whom it seems that neither God nor man cares for them. How can they believe in a Christianity round them, or in the goodness of God? They are very patient, very enduring, and the kindness shewn by the most wretched poor to each other is but another proof that God dwells where we least expect to find Him. But the call is on us; they have a yearning to know more about God. Simple benevolence is not a sufficient answer. You read the Acts of the Apostles and you find that the Apostles persuaded people 2000 years ago that there was "spiritual power" in the world; there was then, and we must prove there is spiritual power now. That power was a power to go on to the end of the world. If you will only shew that spiritual power is living amongst us now, people will not

There is a yearning: Benevolence not sufficient to gratify it. "Is there a Spiritual power *now* in the world?"

"Faith" in the Living Christ. "Grace" of Christ.

trouble whether a certain chapter was written by S. Mark or not, they will see the spiritual power in you and will believe there is a living power working in the world. Faith, Hope, and Charity must exist, live and work, and they will lead the poor to the Fountain Head,—to Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. If you desire that the poor should believe, it is in your power to make them exclaim that "God is living in the work and hearts of believers." Those who believe need not wait to prove their title-deeds—the estate is theirs.

XXXII.

March 19th, 1890.

Christ in Council.

Acts xv. 13—35.

S. James—a real primacy—cf. xii. 17, xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 9.

"Bishop of Jerusalem"—Brother of the Lord—Subsequent Story.

(Traces of his actual language, 14 "Symeon," 23 "Greeting.")

Incidental. Laity 22. "Certain" 24. Two Centres 33, 35.

Main features.

14. A. God's constant plan, not a reforming Rabbi's scheme:

15. Made clear by Prophets—a crucial passage, Amos ix. 11.

[Note 1. A mistaken reading (*Adam* for *Edom*).]

19, 28. B. God's plan being to form "A People" out of "Nations," this work is no Innovation. No Innovations are to mar it.

20, 29. Nothing to be forbidden but what *must* be; The strange list of Two Mortal Sins and Two Ritual points. The two Ritual points temporary; Augustine smiles at idea of their being permanent; why they were so necessary then.

[Note 2. Then, a Temporary precept is put out by Inspiration.]

28. Yes. Inspiration is *claimed* for what may include an error or a precept which was to be dropped. —Notes 1 and 2.

These perhaps lead to truer idea of Inspiration.

Divine Thought reflected in Human Thought, an imperfect surface or medium, though perfectly true and discernible. Perhaps no human vehicle is incapable of being used.

Try modern Christian Society by standards of the Society sketched in this passage. What it counts to be Mortal sins? What it holds to be essential? What it cares for GOD's Aims for Mankind, 14? How it studies them, 15? What it feels "Joy" about, 31? How it finds Strength, 32? Its "Peace," 33? Its purpose? Divine or Trifling, 35?

When Paul and Barnabas had finished giving their report, S. James answered; and in verses 14—21 we have his speech. Notice the concentration of it.

vv. 13—21. "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

S. James speaks last, sums up, moves the letter.

Here we see his real precedence, for it is not S. Peter but S. James who speaks last, summing up what has been said and moving that a conciliar letter should be sent to the Gentiles who had been troubled. Mark too the acceptance of responsibility, the dignity with which he says, "Wherefore my judgment is—"; the word for judgment means decision;

Κρίνω, this is "authority,"

and in that "wherefore" we have the pith of the reasoning. It is clear that S. James is the ruling person at Jerusalem. though he submits it to them to act.

This James "the Lord's brother" was perhaps the James called "of Alphaeus[1]," or of Clopas[2]; we get other evidence of his authority; when Peter was delivered out of prison (xii. 17) he said, "Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren." In Gal. ii. 9 S. Paul mentions James first of the Apostolic body, saying, "James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars,...." And again in Acts xxi. 18 S. Luke writes "the day following (their arrival in Jerusalem) Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present," placing James again as the head of the Church at Jerusalem, or (as the position was called later), as Bishop. Eusebius says that in his time the "Chair of S. James" was shewn in Jerusalem[3]. There is a beautiful tradition of the last days of S. James. He was the type of the antient Jew, true always to his nationality, yet living always in Jerusalem a Christian among Jews, retaining all the Jewish customs to the end, the very ideal of a Christian Jew, chief of the House of Abraham. It is said that he was so constantly on his knees in the Temple, praying for hours, that his knees became as hard as the knees of a camel[4]." At the last when Christianity had spread much among the Jews and the faith of Christ was taught more publicly, certain leaders of the Jews resorted to S. James to ask him to tell them whether or no these Christians were blaspheming in saying Jesus was God. They placed him on the pinnacle or corner stone of the Temple. In one short sentence he declared "that Jesus was the Son of God." And he was pushed from the corner of the Temple and so died.

"Bishop." Chair of S. James shewn. The wonderful tradition of his last years and martyrdom.

A sanctity attached to him as the brother (or cousin) of our Lord, for he had been brought up with Him. "The Brother of the Lord."

vv. 22—35. "Then it seemed good to the Apostles and the elders, with the whole Church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and

[1] Matt. x. 3. [2] Cf. Lu. xxiv. 10; Jo. xix. 25. But see Bishop Lightfoot's dissertation on *The Brothers of the Lord*, Epistle to the Galatians.

[3] Eus. *Hist. Eccles.* VII. 19. [4] Heges. ap. Eus. *Hist. Eccles.* II. 23.

Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote thus by them, 'The Apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well'."

"So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And after they had spent some time there, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth. But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."

We must notice that these people who "troubled the Gentiles" did go out from James, as he acknowledges, but they had no authority from him, the Judaic teaching was all their own. If you compare *v.* 24 with the passage in Gal. ii. 12, the authority of James is the more clear, for Peter himself would not eat any more for a time with the Gentiles after that "certain came from James" because of the great influence of the party which professed to come from James.

Genuineness: (1) traces of his speech. Symeon.

Let me touch upon two little evidences of genuineness.

In *v.* 14 James calls Peter 'Symeon.' You will remember how the Jews were accustomed to taking Gentile names when

they had to go about among the Gentiles, and that they chose them as much as possible like their own in sound, Joshua is Jason, and Saul, Paul. S. Peter's former name of Symeon was very like the common Greek name of Simon, and consequently he was constantly so called[1]. S. Luke, in the Gospel and in the Acts, called him Simon no less than 29 times, but otherwise he only uses the name Symeon in three places; in the genealogy of our Lord where the old Hebrew names are used; of the old prophet at Jerusalem who going into the Temple takes our Lord into his arms; and, as we read just now, in the passage concerning the leading Jews of Antioch, one of whom was called Symeon with the surname "Niger." But you find the name here in the mouth of the very representative of the antient Jews amongst the Christians; the old man who is the very image and figure of the Jewish character, calls Peter by his Hebrew name of Symeon.

Old Hebrew form in the mouth of James.

There is one other little trace of genuineness.

In *v.* 23 you find the word "greeting." "The Apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren, greeting." As it was James who proposed the letter, is he not the most likely person to draw it up? Now the word "greeting" is the Greek word *χαίρειν*, and is a common mode of address in letters. But we have altogether in the New Testament twenty-eight letters[2], that is, twenty-one Epistles and seven "letters to the Churches[3]," and this common Greek greeting is never used in any one of them except the Epistle of S. James (i. 1) "James...to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting."

(2) *χαίρειν* Jas. i. 1: nowhere else.

These are little blossoms or flowers of genuineness which lie by the way, and we pluck them as we go along.

You will observe that the laity have the power to send or reject the letter; but it is the Apostles and elders who formulate the letter, and the whole Church, including the laity, choose the people who shall carry it. This shews a very early and clear distinction between the work of the

The laity have power to accept or reject though not to formulate, and join in choosing the bearers [of] the Commission.

[1] Cf. pp. 305, 405.

[2] Besides certain official letters recorded, *e.g.* Acts xxiii. 26, where the common salutation is used.

[3] Rev. ii. 1—iii. 7.

different orders of the Church. So the two centres, Gentile and Jewish, at Antioch and Jerusalem, are to work on.

The main strong features of this Council.

That God's plan for mankind had ever been one.

Let us turn back to the strong features of the Council. "God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name." In these short words S. James says that the plan of God for mankind had always been one; to us this is nothing strange, but it was so to them. The Jews considered they were a people apart, they had received God's revelation; the glory of the Greeks was their art and their learning; of the Romans their law, their power of ruling their conquests; but the glory of the Jews was their knowledge of God; they believed that the Jew was chosen out of the world to be the friend of God. S. James here declares that God has but one plan for all mankind, "Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world;" and he takes one crucial passage from the prophet Amos ix. 11, 12. The Jew would not recognize other nations as a "people," they were only clans or tribes, the Jews alone were a people. But S. James quotes Amos to shew them that God will allow the nations, the *Ethne*, to come in among the *Laos*, His own people. In the Revised Version this quotation is put in the form of poetry, as it is. The prophet, foretelling what would happen, the sin of Israel, the breaking down of the relation with God, foresaw, as in a vision, the ruins of God's temple, the city of God destroyed; it was the spiritual ruin that he saw in the midst of the worldly magnificence and prosperity of Jerusalem. But when Christ came to rule His people the wonderful psalm was fulfilled—"After these things I will return, and I will build again the temple of David, which is fallen." The Jews doubted that their nation, broken down as it was, could be rebuilt by the bringing in of the Gentiles, yet so it was. The Pharisaic outward forms were broken down; the "temple" was rebuilt by the nations.

That the Prophet's function is so great in shewing that it was no after-thought, no reform of the Rabbi Jesus.

James takes one picturesque and crucial passage of Amos.

S. James only takes this one passage to prove this point, S. Paul takes many more, and your own reading will give you ten times more in the Old Testament. I cannot tell how polished, cultivated Jews resist the plain teaching in the Old Testament that God would bring all nations into His

Church and that the nations would be the "tabernacle of David."

I want to leave for a moment the current of what we are saying to go to a side point which presents a great difficulty to those who do not reconcile their ideas of inspiration with the facts as they find them in the Bible.

S. James quotes in his speech from the Greek version of Amos, the Septuagint rendering, which shews that probably the whole discussion was in Greek. The correct rendering of this passage is, as we have it in our Bibles, "that they may possess the remnant of Edom"—a nation which had been hostile to the Jewish nation from the very beginning of its history, and a cruel foe. But the version from which S. James quotes gives "remnant of men"; the copy from which the translation was made must have had the word "Adam," 'man, men," instead of "Edom." This does not make any real difference to the sense of the argument, because if even the remnant of Edom, the great enemy of the Jew, was to seek after God, far more should better and truer nations. But let us recognise that there is a mistake here; the quotation is incorrect.

S. James quotes Amos incorrectly from LXX. rendering "Adam" for "Edom."

It does not matter to the argument, for if "Edom," *a fortiori* better and truer nations. But it is incorrect.

v. 19. "Wherefore my judgment is,"—there is a great argument here. "God's plan is clear," he argues, "that the Gentiles shall be as the Jews; that they shall not be a separate people, but all men shall be the people of God." 'Wherefore,' says S. James, 'if that is God's plan, do not let us meddle with it. Let the message go straight to the Gentiles without a yoke imposed by us. Peter has touched upon the grievous yoke and bondage of circumcision. If it is God's plan, as we see it to be, that the Gentiles shall be His sons and daughters, do not let us shackle them with our rites and ceremonies, and insist upon their taking upon themselves those humiliations of the Law which are ours, and which have been proved too heavy for us. Do not vex their souls and make it difficult for them.'

God's plan being so and λαός to come out of the nations it is not to be intermeddled with by "side bothers."

That word "trouble" is a very interesting word; it is a compound word, and the main part would answer best to our word "worry,"—'to bring in worries on one side.' This vigorous old man would observe every single custom of the

The εὐαγγέλιον to go straight with no ζύγον.

Only things to be forbidden which must be forbidden of course (ἐπάναγκες).

Law, until he had reached his dying day, but he shrank from binding these yokes on others to whom the Gospel was being brought. 'Do not let us worry these others, we will only write to them to abstain from certain things.'

A strange list. Two Deadly sins and Two Ritual points in one line. Why? Sins which pollute and turn man from God. "Heathen sins" and two observances which were long past away. Why? (The Strangled and Blood were not merely Mosaic. They were Noachic, i.e. to Jews human.)

There are four points mentioned by S. James,—two deadly sins, and two points of ritual. Two sins which pollute the very nature of man and turn it from God: idolatry which closes the eye and turns it away from God; and a polluted life from which purity has vanished; two heathen sins. And side by side with these he mentions two observances which would pass away in time, which have passed away centuries ago. It will seem strange to you he should have made such a point of these. There were two things forbidden to the Jew, namely eating strangled animals and those with blood left in them, or the use of blood in food. These prohibitions were not found in the Law of Moses, but in the seven precepts, called Noachic[1]. To the Jews these precepts seemed human, and were required to be observed by those who were called 'proselytes of the gate;'—the Gentiles who were allowed to worship in the outer gates of the temple.

Simply because the question was "How to live."

The two first things prohibited were characteristic of the Gentiles. Idolatry, of course, was their very religion, and the other sin was habitual and characteristic of the Greek and Roman life. With regard to the two ritual points, the members of the new Church would have to live with the Jews in the closest intercourse. The Epistle excludes first these two things which were in themselves defiling, so that people who did them were on a heathen level and not Christian at all; and these two things which Jews considered so defiling that they would never consent to live with people who did them. It would have been as difficult for the Jews to do so, as it would be to you to live with people who did not wash or dress their hair, or put on clean clothing. They could no more have lived with them than with lepers. And thus, without this restriction, the Gentile Christians would have been thrown out of connection with the antient Church and forced to live with heathen only. This would have

[1] Cf. Gen. ix. 4.

destroyed continuity; the Church had to be welded together so as to become one Church, not two. It was a very wise regulation though it dropped away in time in the West, so soon in fact that S. Augustine smiles at the idea of anybody obeying the ritual precepts in this letter.

A second difficulty. The Apostles command in this solemn way what is merely temporary. Nay in the strongest way identify their own utterance with that of the Holy Spirit. Or at least make their own a reflection of the Holy Spirit's.

The Apostle ends in a most solemn way in *v.* 28. He identifies their utterances with that of the Holy Ghost. Now set this side by side with S. James' mistake in quotation, and the insistance on two points which have passed away, and we get a true view of what inspiration means. I think the word "reflection" will help us to understand this; it seems to me a true metaphor. The perfect mind of the Spirit is mirrored in the human mind of the inspired speakers, but as in a troubled surface, an irregular surface, an imperfect mirror; it is a reflection as good as human nature can present. The mind of the Spirit is perfect, but the reflection of it depends on the human mind. The elders and Apostles can catch the will of God and of the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be made into the people of God and that they should be therefore free from the yoke of bondage; that it must be made possible for them to live with the Jews; but having only had an imperfect version of the Scriptures, S. James makes an incorrect quotation; he gives a temporary command without knowing that it is temporary, allowing for the repugnance of the Jew to these outward Gentile habits, and not looking forward enough to see that these reasons for abstention will soon pass away. And yet, though these inspired men are quite likely under these circumstances to quote wrongly, to give a temporary order as if it were for ever, yet, being a reflection, though an imperfect one, of the mind of the Spirit, they give us the image itself truly, of the glorious wisdom of God and of His insight and the perfect regulation of His Providence, in that He takes our weaknesses and our ignorances and imperfections into account and allows for them all. He does not conjure them away, but allows them absolutely to minister to great revelations which He is making in us. If we set up theories of our own about God's teaching, preconceived ideas of what

Yet here (1) a mistranslation from O.T. (2) a temporary command given without a word of its being temporary.

That helps you to form a true notion of what Inspiration is.

inspiration must be, we shall hinder His teaching, as these Jews would have done, if they had saddled the people with their preconceived ideas of what was essential for man's salvation.

We are the same Church as they.

Let us pass to a deeper thought yet that lies beneath this. We are of the same faith and hope, of the same Church as they; the Church of God has gone on continuously; and it is the glory of our own part of the Church that it has, as it were, roused itself like a young lion, and has shaken off the superstition and accretions of later times, and stands out in primitive vigour. All this is most important. But how does this come home to the individual? with what power and force of responsibility it should come that, not only is our Church an Apostolic Church, but that we should be Apostolic Christians! It is vain that the whole framework of the Church is Apostolic, if we as churchmen and churchwomen do not set ourselves to do Apostolic work, and live up to the Apostolic ideal. Will our Society as it exists bear the test? How far do we personally realize the position, as the Church does theoretically? Do we ask what we must do? Does the sin of idolatry seem as monstrous to some of us, as it ought to do? Idolatry has its roots deep in human nature. Are we moved, as we ought to be, when we see a Church which has not repudiated idolatry, which has but modified it a little, worked it into its system, embroidered its worship with it? Are we moved when we see this Church, with the taint of idolatry clinging to it, spread and gain influence, not among the poor but among the rich? Our forefathers felt this taint of idolatry, and our Prayer-book and the Articles contain very wholesome and solemn ideas on the subject. Are we carelessly forgetting this, and the hold it has on human nature?

How far personally do we realise the position?

Does the first sin seem to us monstrous?

Does the econd?

And the other sin—is it really abhorred by us? Do we make no visible difference in the choice of companions? How is it that so little difference is made between the man of no character and the man of high character in Society, that one is received and welcomed as much as the other in homes and circles? How is it that the young married woman is not warned against making dangerous acquaintances, and goes on

forming association after association which everyone looks upon with regret, until the regret becomes a scandal? How is it that so few have the nerve, or the skill, or the heart to make her feel that misery and shame will at last end the course she is pursuing, and that she will sink into oblivion, forgotten as much as those whom death has carried away? Is it not possible without harshness, without fear, without uncharity, without scandalous talk, to shew a bolder front, which would make it more difficult for people to put themselves unknowingly in these doubtful positions—and to enter upon a course which begins in flattery, in fascination, which ends in death?

There is a new Season beginning. Is it not possible by the aid of the Spirit of Christ and of that antient Church to which we do belong, for you who are thinking of Christ, and who are ready to follow Him, to induce all who are called by His Name absolutely to give up every touch and trace of Gentile sin?

This Epistle and this speech speak out boldly; the very touch of evil, the very name of it is sufficient to shew what was declared to those men and women who were ready to follow Christ—that one kind of life is heathendom, the other is Christianity. What do we gain by belonging to a Church that is Apostolic in all its thought and framework, if we, the individuals who compose it, have no mind to live as they did of old? And are we making vital any point of ritual such as the Apostolic Council declared was not vital; when, lifting the yoke of circumcision from the Gentiles, it imposed (for the reason we have seen) the two restrictions?

Does stress on ritual seem to us vital?

Finally, are we making a point steadily day by day of reading God's word, of knowing what the old prophets tell us about the world's destiny, work, and happiness? God has made known His purpose from the beginning of the world; are we anxious to know what God thought it worth His while to make known of His will to us? Does an insight gained fill us with joy? Does a truth apprehended give us strength? Do we separate 'with Peace' from one another, meaning to do God's work this week or to fill the vacant hours with trifles?

XXXIII.

March 26th, 1890.

Christ through Friends.

Acts xv. 36—xvi. 5.

The Revisit; publication of Decree xvi. 4—"Confirming" xv. 41—Solidifying, extending xvi. 5.

Antioch Group of friends xiii. 1; xv. 33.

Lystra Group xiv. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 14.

xv. 36.

S. Paul's anxiety for Individuals.

Barnabas. Old friends; work in separation.

Mark. The stern refusal of him; final reknitting of bond.

Timotheus. Distinctness of so many scattered touches. Maternal training; early sonship to S. Paul; his questionable position; predictions about him; youth, delicate, ascetic character, not without dangers; how strengthened; the heavy task at Ephesus laid on such shoulders. "The Gift" 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

S. Paul's Letters to him. Personal Appeals, especially the magnificent 1 Tim. v. 11–16.

Conception of The Church in them. Rapid organization.

The touches on Womanly characters—ruinous and constructive.

Mothers and Sons.

The revisit—giving out the Conciliar Decree.

xv. 36—41. "And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. And Barnabas was minded to take with them

John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

The expression, 'some days,' may convey the idea of a long time[1]—in this case a year. This revisit was planned by Paul and Barnabas at the year's end in order to conclude what had been begun during their tour in the previous year.

Two new names have appeared just before this, 'Judas and Silas,' who were sent by the Apostles in Jerusalem to assure the Christians at Antioch of their agreement with the view of Paul and Barnabas. Here is a second group of men working together. The names of the Antioch group were given in Acts xiii. Now they are joined by these men, come to publish the Jerusalem decree, who bring the work at Antioch up to a white heat; the Word of God was in full course among them. Judas and Silas spoke in the assembly by divine inspiration as prophets, as well as Paul and Barnabas and no doubt some others of the group mentioned in Chapter xiii. Then those sent from Jerusalem return.

The Antioch group.

What was the work of the revisit intended to be? The work of 'confirming the Churches'; they strengthened them in faith, gave them solidity, increased them in numbers. This is set forth in the next chapter.

"Confirming."

Solidity. Extension.

xvi. 1—5. "And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess which believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they went on their way through

[1] Cf. p. 214.

the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the Apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the Churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily."

Here we see these little spikes of crystallization shooting out points from centre after centre.

We must look upon this as the work of a group of friends; maintaining themselves by their work, if they were poor; if they were rich, as was Barnabas, divesting themselves of their means for the sake of their work and the poor.

In this tour Paul came to Derbe and Lystra and found Timothy "well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium." We shall be chiefly occupied with him to-day. S. Paul took him with him and made him completely a Jew. They went on, distributing everywhere the Apostolic letter, the decree which confirmed the principle that the Gentiles were not to take upon themselves the yoke of Jewish observances.

The Lystra group.

Here there is another group at Derbe and Lystra, among whom Timothy was, as a disciple. You will remember how that group was formed and the elders were appointed (ch. xiv. 19—23). Numbers of these little star-like centres are beginning to be dotted about everywhere in this heathen country, and in each the Apostles left elders or presbyters. You will see what these presbyters were doing.

S. Paul tells Timothy not to neglect the gift which was given him with the 'laying on of hands' (1 Tim. iv. 14). The Presbyteries were in full life and work, they[1] (together with S. Paul) had made Timothy a presbyter and ordained him for the work to which he was called. These glimpses shew us the beginning of the Apostolic succession.

Paul's anxiety about individuals.

How characteristic of S. Paul to long to see how the brethren fared. S. Augustine calls S. Paul 'the heart of the world'; his anxiety for individuals, his great and deep affection were always so marked. You remember that he was so much distressed about Titus, when he could receive no news of him during his illness in Macedonia, that though

[1] Cf. p. 364. Also p. 343.

'a great door' was opened to him in his work, yet he went back to Titus and describes his joy on finding him recovered[1]. He reminds the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 7) how he had cherished them 'as a nurse cherisheth her own children,' the old nurse who loves them as her own; it is the tenderness of a mother to her baby that he shews to all, caring for all. S. Paul and his companions were not missionaries only; they carried their friendship into their work. It is evident in S. Paul's writings how he deals with each case individually, how he feels to them as a father to his children[2]. The friendship of S. Paul is shewn in endless passages, and if you have it in mind you will continually be struck by it as you read.

Barnabas—the Old Friend parted.

We come to a very sad passage—the separation between Paul and Barnabas, his first friend, his old companion. It seems probable that they had been at the University of Tarsus together[3]; and after S. Paul's conversion, it was Barnabas who stood by him—Barnabas, whose character was established at Jerusalem, came forward and brought him in to the Apostles, assuring them that the former notorious persecutor was sincere in his conversion, and incapable of deceiving them now. Barnabas again went to fetch him from Tarsus for the work at Antioch. They had been constant companions in their first tour, and now when Barnabas wishes to take John Mark, his cousin or nephew (the word may mean either relationship), with them, S. Paul will not have him. Mark had left them in their first journey, his heart had failed him, and he had returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas wished to try him again; the contention became very acute, so they separated, and Barnabas took Mark with him. S. Paul chose Silas. This is the last time in the Acts that Barnabas and Mark are mentioned. But we shall see that they worked—another group of friends—on terms of friendship with S. Paul, though this sharp paroxysm[4], rending their friendship, prevented their working together again. For we find in S. Paul's Epistles that he speaks of Barnabas as a fellow-labourer, as much an Apostle

[1] Cf. pp. 336, 496.
[2] 1 Thess. ii. 11.
[3] Cf. p. 216 etc.
[4] *ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμός....*

as himself (1 Cor. ix. 6). It is quite clear what the Church thought about the matter at the time; we hear no more of Barnabas after he sailed with Mark to Cyprus, but S. Paul was 'commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.' In an early writing Hippolytus speaks of Mark as 'the man with a mutilated finger,' for the Romans had branded a deserter by cutting off his little finger[1]. Paul's sternness is more striking because of his affectionate disposition. But was he guilty of throwing away one who might have been a great worker? You will see that his sternness succeeded.

Mark. Paul's sternness seconded by Church succeeded at last.

In 1 Peter v. 13 we find Mark as the companion of S. Peter in 'Babylon,' and he speaks of him as 'Marcus, my son.' In the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 10) S. Paul speaks of Mark as at Rome; and in 2 Tim. iv. 11 he writes to ask Timothy to bring Mark when he comes, 'for he is useful to me for ministering,' he had been Paul's minister in the first instance. But notice that although S. Paul here sacrificed all his old friendship rather than take with him a man unfaithful to the ministry, one of the messages of his last days is to S. Mark that he may be with him at the end.

Thus S. Paul loses a brother in Barnabas but is rewarded in the next moment by finding a son; for on his mission to Derbe and Lystra, he finds Timothy. Timothy must have been very young at this time, for even twelve years later S. Paul writes to him 'Let no man despise thy youth.' If we reckon that he was then about 30, and he could not well have been older (for he would not have been thought too young for his ministry if he had been the same age as Christ Himself at the time of His ministry), he would have been about 18 at the time that 'he received the gift' by the laying on of hands, of the Presbytery. Therefore at S. Paul's earlier visit (xiv. 6, 19) six years before he could not have been more than twelve. It is possible that Timothy may, with his mother, have witnessed the stoning of Paul, as Paul himself had witnessed the stoning of Stephen, and that this may have been the beginning of his discipleship.

Lost a Brother, found a Son. Timotheus.

How had Timothy been brought up? His mother was

[1] ὁ κολοβοδάκτυλος, Hippolyt. *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, VII. 30.

a Jewess, his father a Greek. Both his mother and grandmother are mentioned (2 Tim. i. 5). His mother had carefully trained him in the reading and knowledge of the Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15). Paul says 'from a babe hast thou known the sacred writings,' or as we might say in modern language 'sacred literature.' Lois and Eunice had taught him from the Old Testament, and this was kindled into life and reality by the faith of the women and by what S. Paul taught him, into a living faith able to 'make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. iii. 15). S. Paul must have taken great pains with him, for in 2 Tim. i. 13 he tells him to 'hold the pattern of sound words' which he had heard from him.

The Faith had given them their Power.

This word 'pattern' is a very beautiful word taken from the antient way of teaching drawing; the master made a delicate sketch or 'pattern' and let the children fill it in, following all his lines. 'Hold fast to that early sketch' S. Paul seems to say. Then the boy-friend becomes inseparable from the older man.

The Boy-friend inseparable from elder man.

Henceforth Timothy is 'beloved child' (not 'son,' as in the old version). 'Bring me my cloak and books,' he says, like a father writing to his boy; and to 'Timothy, my true child in the faith,' he writes in the First Epistle. Out of the 13 Epistles written by S. Paul, two are written to Timothy, and he is mentioned in no less than nine; so completely is this disciple's name bound up with his in the Word of Life.

We must pick out from all these mentions of him very clearly and distinctly what he was like. Timothy was 'well reported of by the brethren, at Lystra and Iconium.' So the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium all knew him, and as these places were 40 miles apart, he must have been employed by the presbyters to go backwards and forwards between the two centres. From the first there seems to have been promise about him. In 1 Tim. i. 18 S. Paul uses this strange expression, 'This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, *according to the prophecies which went before on thee*, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare.' Thus great things had been foretold of Timothy as a boy; now

the divine light shewed itself in him, and he was fulfilling these prophecies. Again in iv. 14 we see S. Paul speaks of the gift that Timothy received 'by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' S. Paul himself had been present then, for he alludes to it in his Second Epistle (i. 6) adding that he had laid his own hands on him.

There comes a circumstance which creates a difficulty sometimes, that S. Paul causes Timothy to be circumcised, at a time when he was actually carrying everywhere the letter from the Council declaring the Jewish rite to be unnecessary for Gentiles. In the case of Titus S. Paul would not allow it. What difference was there between the two?

It is perfectly clear. Timothy's father was a Greek, a heathen, and his mother a Jewess; the Jewish law maintained that everyone who had either parent a Jew, was to be counted a Jew, and as such must be subject to the rites of the Law. Such mixed marriages were disapproved of, and the children were counted of the lowest caste and called 'spurious Jews'; there was a popular saying that such an one 'read in the law is better than an ignorant high-priest.' But Timothy, as the son of a Jewish mother and yet uncircumcised, was no one, and had no standing at all in the estimation of the Jews. In no synagogue would he be permitted to open his lips, unless he went through the rite which, in his case, had been neglected; and his work among the Jews would have been much hindered. Both Jews and Gentiles would have despised him.

S. Paul's treatment of Timothy was exactly opposite to his treatment of Titus and yet perfectly consistent. Titus was Greek on both sides. So too it was quite consistent with the Decree; the rite of circumcision was not brought to an end for Jews who became Christians, but it quietly died out in the course of time.

Now let us look at the character of this youth.

Delicate and ascetic.

1 Tim. v. 23. S. Paul tells him to 'use a little wine for his infirmities'; he seems to have been both delicate in constitution and ascetic. S. Paul says (2 Tim. i. 4): that he is... "night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears";

here we get another trait of a delicate, sensitive character. In 2 Tim. ii. 22 he tells him to 'flee youthful lusts': it was possible he might fall a prey to youthful passions. And again (1 Tim. v. 21, 22), S. Paul charges him to "observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality"; and again not to be "partaker of other men's sins." He seems to have been afraid of his consenting to laxity, and too yielding; and this again agrees with other traits of character.

The fear of πρόσκλισις.

There is a step further: he reminds Timothy (2 Tim. i. 7) that the Spirit given by God is not "of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline"; and he continues, "Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner"; and tenderly reminds him of Onesiphorus who had sought him diligently in Rome "and was not ashamed of my chain[1]"; as if S. Paul had a kind of nervousness lest he should be ashamed of his old father in the faith, and shrink from the testimony of the Lord and His prisoner. We see in *Romola* such a character as this, which has given way to all dangers to which this kind of character, nervous, sensitive, delicate, would be exposed. If you look at 1 Cor. xvi. 10 you will see the strength that lies beneath the surface. Timothy would work, though he might be afraid. S. Paul tells them to care for him tenderly, for he will work as did Paul himself. "Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you *without fear*; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him."

Shrinking from shame.

His youthfulness might be contemned. Nevertheless would work, though afraid.

Then we gather from the Epistles written to him, how strong and heavy was the responsibility which was put on Timothy; for he was made Bishop of Ephesus[2]. In the first Epistle S. Paul re-charges him, instructing him in his duty as Bishop; to check heterodoxy; to take care that the presbyters who serve well be paid double; tells him that he is to hear cases and give sentence, to reprove and give public judgment; he is to deal with every class and age; he is to found a succession, in office and doctrine, telling the things he has heard from S. Paul. Was not this a heavy charge

Commissary at Ephesus. What a task for such a spirit.

[1] 2 Tim. i. 16, 17. [2] p. 517.

to be laid on such a spirit? Whence comes all this strength?

S. Paul first charged him (2 Tim. i. 13) to "hold the pattern of sound words" which he had received from himself; to "guard that good thing which was committed" to him "through the Holy Ghost" (*v.* 14). Timothy is told "not to neglect the gift," to stir up the gift which is in him. So that we perceive a succession: Paul the first receiver of the gift, Timothy who received a charge from him, and those to whom Timothy communicated it.

The Gift, and how it came.

This is what people call the Apostolic succession. But I will not dwell on it. It is not a thing to be boasted of, not a thing with which people are to fight; but it is a knowledge which is an encouragement in trouble. Timothy would be perpetually having misgivings, as to whether he was really and faithfully doing his work, or whether he was giving way, but the thought of the gift that was in him—his commission for the work of the ministry—was his encouragement in any trouble.

Personal address.

Mark what this friendship draws out of S. Paul: and first this magnificent personal address to Timothy as 'God's man' (1 Tim. vi. 11—16). He is charged to compare his own confession to Christ's who witnessed a good confession before many witnesses. If you read these Epistles carefully through, you will see there are more allusions to soldiering and hard labour than in any of S. Paul's other letters. At last S. Paul is only waiting for death and almost alone longing for Timothy; he is already offered, he is tired out, his time of departure is come (2 Tim. iv. 6—8). "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" (*v.* 9).

Notice again the profundity and pathos of the thought, so that almost every verse in these two Epistles is a prayer, or convertible into a prayer.

In 1 Tim. iii. 15 there is a wonderful definition of the Church. S. Paul gives Timothy directions as to "how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

There is another characteristic—the extraordinarily skilful touches about women of every class.

The touches on womanly character.

First he speaks of the idle young widows.

The idle young widow.

(1 Tim. v. 1—16). Could any novelist or dramatist have greater skill than this? They are gossips, and none are so vicious as this class. Then what a modern touch you have here—they are free thinkers; they have rejected their first faith; they go about pleasure hunting, they set their hearts on dress. They are dead while living—unloving, sinful. They are ruinous to the society of the Church. And do you mark this—he only speaks of the young *widows*, he never dreams that the young married woman could try to do mischief; there is nothing about brides.

Then again he speaks of 'silly women,' 'poor little women-things,' laden with their sins, setting their hearts on all manner of things which they long for, so that their thoughts and intellects run to waste, playing at learning, never able to get on, so that they never come to knowledge of the truth, never make any progress, but little by little are turned away from the faith.

The γυναικάρια ruinous to society.

Now I would have you look at the contrast of the women to whose friendship and knowledge he thinks Timothy owes his safety.

What a magnificent contrast! The Christian women must be the builders of a Church. Their work, like yours, must be, not ruinous but constructive of society. He runs through a list of the duties of a Christian woman: 'bringing up children,' 'ruling her house' like a queen, her hospitality to strangers, her succour to those in tribulation, such an one is to have the becomingness or grace of a priestess in her stature as it is described in the Epistle to Titus.

The magnificent contrast of pure Christian woman.

Constructive of Society.

We cannot dwell on this without thinking of the relation of mothers and sons. There is no such perfect relation as that between Timothy and Lois, no friendship like that between mother and son, the reverence, the purity, the obedience, the tenderness of it, the power and right influence of the mother. Is this all as it should be now amongst us? What do most mothers expect of their sons? First of all

Mothers and Sons.

What most think and expect of their boys.

they are most dear to them as little children; then mothers are proud of their beauty, the grace and strength of the boys, of the ideas that begin to grow in them. But then how many mothers begin to fear that the sons must fall away, that the friendship cannot grow and ripen on. How many a mother thinks that as her boys grow older they must come into temptation, and fall, that they must be defiled, but that they will quiet down and return to her, forgetting the evil of past days.

What a mother should expect of a Baptized Boy—while she holds to him.

A mother ought to realize how early mischief begins, and consider it her duty to take care that the promise which was made for her son in baptism shall be fulfilled so far as she can fulfil it. She should make her boy feel that she is his best friend, that to her he can confide everything; and as he grew up he would feel he could not commit sin against the purity his mother had taught him, and that the breach of another's purity would be a breath on hers. Then every mother would be living in that grace of a priestess that she had created for herself and her children; she would have consecrated herself and them to God. Would this not make the sons more holy and manly?

CHRIST AND THE GREAT TOWNS.

Acts xvi. 12—xix. 41.

The Military Colony, xvi. 12. (xxxiv., xxxv.)
Philippi.

The Free Town and the Quiet Place, xvii. 1. (xxxvi.)
Thessalonica and Beroea.

The University Town, xvii. 15. (xxxvii., xxxviii.)
Athens.

Commercial Luxury, xviii. 1. (xxxix.)
Corinth.

Corinth by Ephesus to Jerusalem, xviii. 18. (xl.)

Commercial Religion, xix. 1. (xli., xlii., xliii.)
Ephesus.

XXXIV.

April 23rd, 1890.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xvi. 6—15.

6—10. Constraint and Call into Europe.

[10. Quiet entrance of Luke, Physician.]

12. First Great Town. *Military* '*Colonia*' of Philippi.

The River Oratory and the Women.

The Lady's Household.

God's long-lasting Hindrances at last explained.

In the Addresses during Lent we saw how the work and travels of the Apostles were taking a district course.

The heads of what we then read I will go over briefly:

(1) The Gospel breaking forth beyond the narrow limits of Palestine.

(2) Christ and the Great Man.

(3) Christ and the Town. The town here singled out was one of the quiet towns of the world.

(4) Christ and the Country places: how the Church shot out rays as from a great centre.

(5) The memorable Council; the first Council the Church ever gathered.

In the subjects for the Addresses during the summer we shall see, on no less remarkable lines, Christ taking possession of the great towns. You will remember that the plan of civilisation then was as different as could be imagined from

what it is now. Then the great city of Rome pervaded the whole world, with its armies and its laws; but the seats of the more antient and beautiful civilisation were clustered round the Archipelago, on both sides of it. It was not like the case of a great country on whose outer edges great towns—like London, Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol—touched the sea; but the towns were planted round the shores of the sea, not round the coasts of a country. If you draw a line through the great centres of civilisation of that time you will find that the line followed the coasts of the Aegean.

Rome was the only exception. Rome was the great focus in which all powers settled, because of its innate spirit of law, and the strength which converted the whole world into provinces of Rome.

Compare Christ on the Sea of Galilee.

Christ worked on the same plan. The Sea of Galilee did not present itself to antient thought as a beautiful blue lake, surrounded by great hills, whose sides were clothed with rhododendrons. The shores of the lake were the Manchester of that day; it was not a manufacturing district indeed, but a district where the poor were flung together in great masses. The Galilaeans would represent to the inhabitant of Palestine the hard-worked masses remote from the beautiful centres of Palestine, the cities of Caesarea and Jerusalem. The first prophecy, which is applied to the ministry of Christ in S. Matthew's Gospel, is "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." S. Matthew quotes this when he shews why Christ went and lived in Capernaum[1]—because it was a land of darkness with a population whose life was given to their business; and around these places, not far from these towns with their swarming inhabitants, were the villas, the country houses of their Roman masters.

At first sight we should be inclined to think that the plan described in ch. xvi. was in opposition to this principle of working.

[1] Matt. iv. 15, 16.

vv. 6, 7. "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not."

But the term 'Asia' was not used as we use it now for the whole continent, nor as meaning Asia Minor, which is quite a modern use; 'Asia,' as here used, meant a small square of country on the west coast of Asia Minor.

The western coast of the great oblong of Asia Minor runs almost north and south. This coast may be divided into three parts, and 'Asia' would then be fairly accurately represented by a square on the middle third. 'Asia' was not a political term at all, it was not proconsular Asia, but it was the name of a district like one of the great districts of England, as for instance Craven in Yorkshire. It was an undefined district peopled by tribes related to one another: 'Asia' of antient days was the kingdom of Croesus.

At the beginning of the 'Revelation' notice the letters of John, or rather of Christ written through John, to the Churches of Asia; the places all lie close together in the district I described. The Seven Churches were not existing at this time, but were soon after established.

The plan of teaching through the towns would seem to be abandoned when, having passed through the thinly-populated districts of Phrygia and Galatia, the Apostles were forbidden to speak the Word in Asia. Then they looked towards Bithynia, an almost equally populous district with great sea-ports. In laying out their plans they had thought at first they would go to the well-populated district of Asia, then to the populous sea-ports of Bithynia, but again "the Spirit of Jesus (for this is the right reading here) suffered them not." This is one of the passages which reminds us that their Master, Jesus, was with them still. You remember how I shewed you that all the circumstances of His Ascension prove that He was only out of sight, but still with His disciples.

Withholding by "Spirit of Jesus."

v. 8. "And passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas."

They were still pursuing the same way, for Troas is a large town. The site of it now lies between two great rivers, on a plateau, which was then completely covered by the city. This account of the manner in which they feel their way is so natural; they seek the districts in which their work seems likely to be most effective; but every time they decide on a district they find that they are not allowed to go there; they find themselves hindered by the Spirit and the Spirit does not tell them where to go.

It is mentioned in the life of Socrates that he told his judges, at the trial, of his conviction that he was guided by what he called a *δαιμόνιον*—a divine being[1]; he explains that this *δαιμόνιον* never directed him to an act, but only hindered him from certain things that he intended to do: he planned what to do, and if he was not to follow his plan a divine instinct within him held him back. There is a very remarkable resemblance between this that we have been reading and what Socrates says, for we cannot doubt that the great heathen forerunner of Christ spoke the truth when he said that the Divine power withheld him. Here Christ was dealing in the same way with His disciples.

The Vision of Need.

v. 9. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

A Macedonian could be recognised by his costume or by his speech, for there were some letters which a Macedonian could not pronounce[2]. The Apostles were now on the coast of Asia Minor; Macedonia was the nearest European country. On the direct line was the mountainous island of Samothrace; further on Thasos; then across the sea Turkey in Europe, and Neapolis the port of Philippi[2].

v. 10. "And when he had seen the vision, straightway

[1] *Apol.* 31. Cf. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. by F. J. Church, p. 53, "It is that I have a certain divine sign from the gods.... I have had it from childhood; it is a kind of voice, which, when it speaks, always turns me back from whatever I am going to do, and never urges me to act."

[2] Cf. Ramsay's conjecture, *S. Paul the Traveller*, p. 202.

we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

Need of the West, drawing on to Europe. Still insisting on human judgment.

We see then that God will have us use our own will and understanding. The Apostles were right in thinking that they were to go on planning; when they saw the vision it was not intended to take away from them the power of reason and judgment, but they considered the question of what it might mean and *concluded* that they were to go to Macedonia. What this man of the vision expressed was the need, not only of Macedonia, but of the West. The work of God had not yet been done among the sons of Japhet. All the work of God from the time of Abraham had (except for accidental overflowing) gone on among the children of Shem; they had been most fit for it because of their spirituality. Our race, the enterprising nations of the West, fighters, builders, sailors, and manufacturers, had gone on corrupting, through the awful polytheism of Greece and Rome, the most beautiful original ideas. Now it was the time when the sons of Japhet should cry to the children of Shem to help them. You remember the prophecy of Noah about the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth[1]. We stand here at the point when that aweful prophecy was to be fulfilled.

vv. 11, 12. "Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days."

All this geography is most accurate, and the course of this voyage would be followed at the present day when wind was of any importance. The currents which run round the Bosphorus and down the west coast of Asia Minor are too strong for vessels unless there is a favouring wind. There must have been a good wind or they would have passed below Thasos.

Weird Samothrace.

Samothrace was a kind of haunted place according to the Greeks, so they did not stay there. Philippi is a city of Macedonia—the first of the district, a Roman colony.

[1] Gen. ix. 25—27.

Macedonia —4 Divisions [made] by Romans to command obedience.

Rome with its awful armies overpowered Macedonia, with its awful power of government ruled it in a way in which we cannot think of ruling subject countries, but which was effective. Macedonia was an enormous source of wealth, and its people were industrious. It was divided into four districts by lines drawn straight across it. The terrible Roman governors said, 'You shall live under your own laws,'—for they knew that they should govern the Macedonians more easily in this way—'but we will plant among you colonies under Roman law, to keep you quiet.' These Roman colonies were of a quite different kind from English colonies. 'You will not be meddled with as long as you obey our rule, and pay taxes, but none of the four districts may intermarry with one another. No man is to possess a house or land in another district.' Thus the people might live by their own usages and worship their own gods, but their unity was to be broken up.

Philippi a "Colonia" "first" of this "part."

The old version is not adequate here; it gives "the chief city of that part of Macedonia"; but the "first city of the district" does not mean the ruling city of Macedonia, which was Amphipolis, but means the first in the district. Philippi then was one of these colonies[1]; it was quite different from an English colony, being a settlement of veterans.

The Romans did not keep their soldiers till they were at the end of their powers, but the veterans served for a given number of years and then were set to keep the borders of the Empire. Each was supplied with a farm of his own on which he could settle, living in the colony under the laws of Rome; and the object of this was partly to give them dignity, partly to connect them more closely with Rome. So living they could have all the privileges and honours of Romans. Hence the *coloniae imperii* were outposts of the Roman Empire.

Such was the position of the colony of Philippi; all the land about was owned by the Roman soldiers, who kept the nation in subordination. Roman laws, not local laws, were binding in Philippi.

[1] Cf. *S. Paul the Traveller*, p. 206.

Christ had fenced off all inadequate ways of proceeding; He had put a barrier this way and that, fencing off all those countries which they had wished to go to;—for He will deal with them by and by on a larger policy. It was clear as daylight that they had to do some great thing first, when the man of Macedonia called them to come across for the first time into Europe. When they have effected a landing there they may come back. This is like the way things happen in our own lives.

Jesus fencing off Inadequate Ways.

Notice the beautifully modest way in which S. Luke appears now in the Acts. All the while, until now, he had spoken of "them" and "they"; now he says "setting sail, therefore, *we* made a straight course." S. Luke was with S. Paul now. The way in which he keeps himself out of sight is a beautiful pattern for us; for the narrative goes on so that many reading it would not notice where he comes in.

Quiet entrance of Luke the Physician.

This is made more remarkable by a point in the Greek which I will mention in passing. In the Greek of this period, unlike the antient Greek, a large number of personal pronouns are used; in the writing of that time personal pronouns are expressed as much as in English; but the pronoun is dropped in this place, so little does Luke wish to bring himself into notice.

This casts light on S. Luke's personality. We know he was a Gentile[1] physician, and S. Paul calls him "the *beloved* physician[2]"; all that we hear of him shews his amiability, sweetness, and lenient judgment—the parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Prodigal Son are only in S. Luke's Gospel; so, too, the Song of Simeon, and the Song of the Virgin—the tenderest points of the Gospel.

We see at once from this passage that although a Gentile S. Luke was not converted just now; for he appears at once as a preacher.

Himself evidently already a preacher.

See the coincidence that appears below the surface.

At Troas Luke joins S. Paul's party and goes on at once

Already at Troas.

[1] Cf. *S. Paul the Traveller*, p. 201 ff.

[2] Col. iv. 14.

A Church there without Paul's preaching.

with them. When S. Paul comes back to Troas he finds already a large congregation of Christians[1]. How had they become so? S. Paul and his party had not taught them, but had picked up at Troas one who was already a preacher, S. Luke, who was forming a Church there on his own account. Why then did he leave Troas? S. Paul tells us in one of his letters how ill he himself had been all the time he was travelling; there is not indeed a word about his being ill in the Acts, but in Galatians iv. 13, 14 he says, speaking of the time past, "Ye know that because of *an infirmity of the flesh* I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ."

He says here, not only that he has been ill, but that it was because of the infirmity of the flesh that he preached to them at first; the infirmity was such as made him travel slowly, so that he was able to bestow a great deal of time on the district.

He speaks of this infirmity in the Epistle to the Corinthians[2] where he says, "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me...Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." The word "thorn" here means a stake, as if his whole body were pierced by terrible suffering. Christ would not take away his suffering, but He made S. Paul strong enough to bear it; the suffering then must have been terrible.

There is a theory beautifully worked out by Lightfoot in the *Galatians*[3], that S. Paul's illness was epilepsy. He parallels it with a most remarkable account of King Alfred's suffering from epilepsy. Alfred prayed again and again that God, who had work to be done by him, would free him from this illness; and he speaks of the way in which he was put to shame in his court when a fit of epilepsy made him wallow on the ground; it seemed to himself to degrade him;

[1] Ch. xx. 6 ff. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

[3] Pp. 169—175; and cf. *S. Paul the Traveller*, where the author argues that the affliction was chronic malarial fever, p. 94 ff.

to take away his power and command. So he thought; but in reality the reverse was the case.

S. Paul uses a singular expression in this passage. It is translated in our version, "ye despised not, nor *rejected*"—the word in the original really means "spat out."

To "spit out" was what these people did when a thing was thought to be ill-omened, the work of an evil spirit; and this was how they regarded epilepsy, which was particularly contemptible in their eyes.

Now put together these things. S. Luke ready at Troas, S. Paul coming to Troas borne down by suffering, only thankful that the Galatians had not "spat him out." At Troas he finds a Christian physician. It is not wonderful that the Christian physician says, 'I will give up my work and go with you.' From this time S. Paul calls him "well-beloved." Doesn't this convince one of the impossibility that the narrative should be anything but the simple natural truth? Is it possible that these things which fit so perfectly together, without any stress being laid on them, can be anything but a narrative of what was going on at the moment?

Why Luke accompanies S. Paul henceforth.

Go back to the colony: London was a Roman colony, so was Lincoln, which keeps the trace of this fact in its name; as also Colne. All these and others were places where the Romans planted veterans.

It could not have been pleasant to preach in a place of which the population consisted, on the one hand of old Roman veterans, and on the other of a people dispersed and trampled upon.

S. Paul does not try to preach, and as he does not try he gets on well.

And what happened?

v. 13. "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which were come together."

About this time the Jews were ordered to depart from Rome; and there is no doubt that the colony of soldiers

under Roman law must have made it not too pleasant for the Jews in Philippi; there was no synagogue there.

But why was the place of prayer then by the river? Why was not the city, as would seem natural, on the river? The reason is that the river was not large enough to be of any use for purposes of navigation, and the old name of Philippi, Κρηνῖδες, that is, "Fountains" or "Wells," points to the fact that at Philippi there were springs bubbling up within the city. All the water that was wanted, therefore, was within the walls, and the river was not large enough for other purposes. A road, the Via Egnatia, which ran through the town crossed the river a mile from the city. This account then could not have been written by anyone who did not know the place, being contrary to what would naturally be supposed.

The Jews, when they had not a synagogue, and sometimes even when they had, made a quiet place of prayer by a river side, for they wanted the water for ablution. Such a place was called προσευχή, and was a circular place open to the air, and built as near as possible to the river.

They sat down as Rabbis to teach.

"We sat down." This was the attitude of Rabbis; it shewed that they were ready to speak. You remember when Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch in Pisidia they entered a synagogue and sat down[1], and the rulers of the synagogue sent to say to them, "Brethren, if you have anything to say to the people say on."

"And spoke unto the women." Why were they women? This is not easy to explain, but think of the character of the city. The Jews had no settlement there, as they would have had before the Romans came, and as they had in Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue. Many of the Jews went to Thessalonica when the Roman settlement was made at Philippi. But what had the Jews done in Philippi while they were there? Would they not have proselytised, and would not the faithful proselytes be women? The women would be sure to keep up the services when their teachers went.

[1] Ch. xiii. 14.

There is just this other conjecture to explain the fact. The women generally worshipped apart from the men, in the same place, but separated by a screen. It is supposed this place may have been too small for such separation to be possible, and that the women therefore worshipped at a different time from the men.

But the first explanation is more likely; that the Jews were swept away, but that faithful women remained whom they had converted. Among these women there is no mention of a Jewess.

v. 14. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

Coincidences—"Lydia,"

Thyatira is a city in that 'Asia' of which we spoke, in Lydia. When a strange woman came from Lydia to Macedonia, people were likely to call her Lydia—the Lydian woman; just so many of our English surnames are taken from the places from which people came. This woman, therefore, from Thyatira, settling in Macedonia, was called Lydia.

"of Thyatira."

Another touch:—there is one passage in Strabo in which it is mentioned that Thyatira was increased and embellished during the Macedonian period, when also the name *Thyatira* was given to it[1]; here we find a Lydian woman coming back to Macedonia; the old tie was not broken.

This *purple* was the costliest dye in the world. The prices that are mentioned of purple garments are as wicked as any French or American prices; or rather they would be as wicked if the antients had been Christian.

A seller of purple then would be a rich capitalist.

v. 15. "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

"Her household"; this shews the right relation of a Chris-

[1] Strabo, XIII. p. 534, ed. Müller and Dübner.

tian to her household; that relation is broken up in these days; but here you see that the moment Lydia becomes a Christian her household is baptized also.

How touching is her saying; "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide." They had so judged her, and how could they resist this modest, womanly way of putting her request? This is one of the few instances of S. Paul's consenting to stay in the house of any person.

All this account holds together. Lydia's wealth and her character make Paul willing to stay at her house; whereas at the next place to which he went he gained his living with his own hands.

Four times, too, he received a present from the Philippians, and from the Epistle we see that Philippi was the only place from which he would consent to receive help. "No church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only[1]."

After this beginning he thought it necessary to be independent and receive nothing.

Exemplifications of Spirit of Christianity.

But now what teaching is there for us which lies below the surface in this? Let us break off and speak of ourselves a few moments.

(*a*) Difficulties and hindrances of many years. At last explained.

A great deal that is Christian and spiritual may be learnt from this concerning the difficulties and hindrances, that sometimes, for many years, beset our most cherished plans and hinder us from doing what we are sure is good for ourselves and for others. A bar comes down, and keeps us from what we most want, prevents us from dedicating our time and our efforts to a certain work. We may have laid plans well and gone on for a long time towards something which we trust will be of great service to God, and we find ourselves suddenly face to face with a dead wall.

We need not be in the least discouraged if we are sincere; we need not think that we have not judged rightly, and that no need exists as we thought; nor that we are forbidden to work because we are unworthy. Do not let us say that

[1] Phil. iv. 15.

if the thing we had planned were really of service to the Lord, if our heart were really right He would not refuse us, and that we are only kept back because of our unworthiness. We must not allow ourselves any such thoughts. The time of waiting was soon over in S. Paul's case, but how serious it must have been. First there was a time of great prosperity, in which it seemed as if nothing would be a hindrance, to his work; his own infirmity was no hindrance, for he was received by the Galatians "as an angel of God." Then he looks down on Asia and his spirit rises high as he thinks how many there are to be delivered from idolatry, how many are suffering and labouring who would value above all the thought of Christ. He feels that he must go and teach them. Then, without in the least knowing why, he finds he is not to go.

The reason then of his miscalculation is perhaps that he has flown too high—he should rather go and teach among the sailors of the Black Sea, who might be more open-hearted. Again he meets a dead wall. But Troas perhaps was the place, and they go on to Troas; but again, no. If it had come to the hearts of any of this company that God would not receive them, or that they must keep back because they were not worthy, what a loss it would have been; a loss, perhaps, of the whole cause. And what a loss it is to ourselves; what a thought it is of God that He would reject a heart that wished to offer itself to Him, and only thought itself not worthy. That dejection of spirit would lower the whole tone, and it would not end there. We attribute to God what we should be ashamed of in ourselves. Can a person reject the humble, loving service of another, saying, "You are not worthy to serve me"?

A dream in the night revealed the man of Macedonia in his mountain dress, asking for help.

So it would be with us. Though for years we should have been kept back from serving God as we should desire, if we keep the loving desire some time we shall discern, in a dream in the night, what God means us to do; where we thought there was a dead wall a door will open. Our work

is to keep up the sincere desire until He shews the way, not to fall back from desire, saying that we are unworthy; unless, indeed, we know the particular way in which we are unworthy, and then we must set ourselves to get rid of it. It is our work to fit ourselves in every way to do, and to wish to do; to go on with the sincere desire of serving God from day to day, telling God our desire.

If, when the Spirit of Jesus had a plan for the evangelization of the whole world (of which our view of evangelization was only a small part), we said, "I *will* do what I had intended even if I have to burst the hindrances,"—this would be the worst of all calamities. I do not doubt but that He would allow us to do it, for He deals in a way of which the wisest and gentlest man's dealing is only a faint image.

Are explained alas! sooner if we burst them.

He was then certainly present and only just out of sight; dealing with them while they went on in blindness and dumbness, but in the certainty that He was preparing for them something much greater than they had thought.

(*b*) Egotism—corrected by Luke; not even a ἡμεῖς ("we").

And this second lesson falls in with the first; to try and crush egotism. This beautiful writer hides from us what he has done, we can only guess that he founded the Church at Troas, only guess when he entered on his work of love for the great Apostle; it requires particular attention to know that he is there at all. Contrast this attitude with the tone of those people who are impatient when their own personality does not enter into the discussion; how they bring the conversation round to themselves, they cannot hear anything said but they illustrate it by something out of their own experience; they cannot relate an incident but they put in, "*I* saw," "*I* felt." The pronoun 'I' cannot be kept out of their talk because they cannot get it out of their souls.

There is a French book which I have read, but of which I cannot now find the title, in which a French lady is describing the goodness of Christ, and she does so in the most eloquent language. The editor adds a note, saying merely, "Il est très difficile d'abolir le pronom 'je.'" The editor is sneering, of course, at religious people. But we should have

infinitely more effect if we could abolish the pronoun 'I' from our hearts. We shall be better people as parts of God's infinite whole than if we struggle to be only ourselves—as ourselves, we are but atoms, but if we get into our souls the relation which we have to the whole world of God we are great indeed.

We are more valuable as parts than as units.

XXXV.

May 14th, 1890.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xvi. 16—40. *The Military Colony* (*continued*).

Philippi.

16—18. Conflict with the Old Spiritual Powers (the third) and Commercial Religion—The 'divided consciousness' of their victim restored by 'Salvation.'

20. The "praetors" give up victims to a mob-demonstration.

23. The taking of injustice, suffering, insult with "hymns."

25. Effect on imprisoned and sleeping souls.

31. Higher turn given to mere 'desire to be saved.'

33. Washing of wounds and of sins. The 'Word of the Lord.'

37. S. Paul's assertion of his social Privilege.

The Baptism of the two Houses, 15, 33.

Our 'handy' oracles; our real yearnings; Self-Exorcism.

Suffering borne 'with singing' is deliverance 'for us and for many.'

Use existing conditions of Society and even its Privileges for Christ.

If we do not, is ours the Christian Religion?—Is a Society Day a Christian Day? Is it necessary that it should not be?

Acts xvi. 16. "And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying."

This is the third conflict which the Apostles had, so far as we hear, with the old spiritual powers; the first was the contention with the magician Simon Magus; the second that with the sorcerer Elymas.

Third conflict with old spiritual powers; and with commercial religion.

Without going deeply into the subject which is greatly beyond our knowledge we can realise what was the outer appearance of one so possessed.

This woman was a Pythoness. According to the legend the god Apollo slew the Python. In one of the most magnificent of ancient statues the Apollo Belvidere stands with his bow in his hand looking after the Python, after having discharged his arrow. In connection with this, or with a darker meaning of that strange legend, Apollo was called Pythios. You know how the whole world resorted to the temple when the Pythia uttered the divine oracles. All the world went there; even philosophers, even Socrates himself supposed her capable of divine knowledge. We ourselves think that the oracles uttered had always a double meaning, so that each man could take the oracle with the meaning which was true to fact.

Pythoness.

This girl was a Pythia: she was what we should call mad; but we know how some who appear to be insane or weak in mind seem sometimes to have a strange insight. When once she was taken in hand by a company—as her masters really were—she brought them much gain. No doubt some suggestions were made to her, and in her wild way of talking she threw out strange words, applicable to things known to those who consulted her secretly. She had gradually gained much reputation, and people resorted to her to get these mysterious answers. The Greeks and Romans believed that in cases of this kind there was a mysterious Being who used such people as the Pythoness and caused them to make answers which should lure the intended victims of the god to their own destruction. It would surely take more knowledge than any of us possess to say it is impossible that there should be some such contact with spiritual powers through nerves or brain.

Coincidence and applicability of wild words.

Whether we judge this impossible or not, it was inevitable

that S. Paul should take the ideas, and think the thoughts of his time; it was inevitable that he should be ignorant of what we know about the nerves and the brain; he could not escape the ideas of his time any more than in the Middle Ages people could help believing what they saw, that the sun rose, travelled over the sky and set again.

Divided consciousness; not merely woman passive, and demon mocking or confessing.

This phenomenon more naturally presents itself to us as a *divided consciousness*, a condition in which the direction of the thoughts and the spirit are out of the power of the human being. We are not inclined to look upon such a poor human being as overcome by some mocking Being which could simulate the utterance of the person victimised. We do not look upon such a phenomenon as the union of two beings, but as a divided consciousness in one human being.

That woman's spirit yearning for what could thus be brought.

Dim sense of 'Salvation,' unlike her masters.

This insane girl uttered wild nonsense which, to those who listened, appeared to be sense; and scraps of talk with a higher meaning mingled with it, a yearning for a deliverer. This girl haunted the Apostles, standing by the wayside as they went to prayer, and with a higher meaning than she knew, she exclaimed (*v.* 17), "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation." So she said, little witting what she meant by "shewing the way of salvation"—while she yearned for something unknown which she felt to be a deliverance, and which she called "salvation." "And this she did for many days" (*v.* 18).

Paul could not bear the sight; it troubled him, till at last he turned in his yearning. So unlike the masters who thought of nothing but their gain, he said to the poor dim sense, "I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The wild words ceased, she spoke no more but in words of quietness and sense. Then Paul found himself not in conflict with these spiritual powers only.

Her Deliverance. Evening of Stormy Day.

Think what the world would be if it were full of spirits, as people believed it to be then—spirits in every street, in every house; if the world were not occupied by the serene power of God, but by a mass of mocking evil spirits.

And here S. Paul had to contend, not only with the evil

spirit of the girl, but with the commercial spirit of her masters, who made money by her.

A 'company'; valuable and dangerous possession; could not have insured her.

How natural that she should be in the ownership of a company. An accident might put an end to her value; she might return to her reason; death or an illness might close her career. Therefore it is natural that she should be taken in hand by a company. But the moment she was wise, was saved, her masters were ruined—"the hope of their gain was gone."

v. 19. "But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the market-place before the rulers."

Paul and Silas were guilty persons now. They ran a double danger of persecution; they were first hated for being Jews by the Roman and Greek population and now they were hated by the Jews for not being Jews; from both sides came the double stream of persecution.

The Apostles had double persecution—from Roman as being Jews, and from Jews as not being Jews.

The Roman law allowed any person to worship according to his own religion, but would not allow him to adopt any other worship except that of the gods of the Roman Empire. Thus the Jews were allowed their own worship; but when the Jews urged that the Christians were not of their religion the latter became liable to be put to death as malefactors.

Notice some of these coincidences which come in by the way and give such a perfect conviction of truth; 'they dragged Paul and Silas into the forum.' The forum was the place for the administration of justice and law, the centre of the life of an antient city.

v. 20. "And when they had brought them unto the magistrates they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city." "Being Jews," being obnoxious therefore to the magistrates.

v. 21. "And set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans." "Being Romans"; they were not Romans by birth, but being colonists they had privileges as Roman citizens of which they were proud. "Being" is not the same in these two cases; in the first it means "*being to begin with Jews,*" the

The illicita religio.

language emphasizing the odium. 'Not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe; not lawful to allow among us, still less to accept.' 'The religion,' they urge, 'is neither Jewish nor Roman; such a religion is against the law, but these men want us not only to admit it, but to observe it.'

v. 22. "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods."

All this passage is exceedingly interesting, bristling with points which can only be verified by inscriptions and coins which were unknown until the last few years.

You will see in the margin of the Revised Version that the word for "magistrates" is "praetors." The praetor was antiently an officer of great magnificence in Rome—the next person to the consul; his dignity was the highest possible except that of the consul, and on account of his dignity he was attended by lictors who carried *fasces*, that is, an axe in a bundle of rods bound round with cords. These were the insignia of his office for he could inflict the punishment of scourging.

The officers who governed colonies were not properly called *praetors*, but *duumviri*. We actually have a passage in Cicero where he mentions a certain great colony, Capua, in which the duumviri are not content with being called duumviri and wish to be called praetors; presently, he says, they will have lictors, imitating the usages of Rome itself[1].

Notice that the incident in the Acts occurred about 100 years after Cicero. While the Romans still called the magistrates of Philippi duumviri, evidently, from the passage in Acts, lictors had been introduced[2]; and the magistrates had taken the title of praetor. This fact is confirmed by discoveries at Philippi[3]. Here is another of the touches so true to the life of the colony, although it has been left for recent years to shew its accuracy.

[1] Cic. *De Leg. Agr.* II. 34, p. 457, ed. Long., "...quum ceteris in Coloniis duumviri appellantur hi se praetores appellari volebant...."

[2] *v.* 35. R.V. 'sergeants,' margin, 'lictors.'

[3] Cf. Lightfoot's *Epistle to the Philippians*, 1868, p. 50, n. 4.

Hasty action without trial because they were nervous about the demonstration of the mob.

Then arose a mob demonstration against the Apostles; the multitude rose up. And as Pontius Pilate was terrified by the mob, so now these praetors rend their garments; and for fear of these men, who were more potent than the gods themselves, the jailor thrusts them into the inner prison, and makes their feet fast in the stocks.

So to punish a Roman citizen without inquiry was an unlawful proceeding, a proceeding for which magistrates had been indicted again and again. There is one particular well-known passage in which Cicero indicts Verres, a praetor of Sicily, for having done this very thing—for having dragged an honourable man into the market-place at Massena, stripped and beaten him; while through the clamour of the mob he was heard to exclaim, 'I am a Roman citizen.'

Note how much S. Paul suffered—the violation of his civil rights, the cruelty of the flogging, which would be extreme to a gently-nurtured person, and shameful ignominy. You see how he felt the indignity from his expression of gratitude to the people of Thessalonica (to which he went straight from Philippi) for having received him when he came to them in such a condition, having been "shamefully entreated" (1 Thess. i., ii. 1, 2).

As a Roman citizen, shame rose in him at the thought of it, even months afterwards, though God had been able to comfort him after the sufferings and insults received at Philippi.

vv. 23, 24. "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

"The inner prison." We know what terrible places the inner prisons were in our own old castles. With the Romans they were apartments below the level of the ground; with no light, but sometimes a spring of water rising and running away.

"In the stocks." This was the way in which the jailor interpreted the command to keep them safely.

v. 25. "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying

and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

This incident describes the Christian usage which gradually gave rise to the midnight service of Mattins (properly called Nocturns), which was held the moment midnight had passed.

"Listening." The word means 'listening hard.'

The prisoners had been accustomed to very different sounds—imprecations and cursing; but those they now heard made the chained prisoners turn and listen.

v. 26. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed."

As an earthquake passes it shakes doors open; the chains were loosed because the ends of the chains were fastened into the walls, as we see in antient and mediaeval pictures; the quaking would shake the staples out of the walls.

v. 27. "And the jailor being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped."

The jailor was a considerable officer; he was "about to kill himself." Here is a touch of the antient life; nothing would be more natural to a Roman under such circumstances. Suicide was to the antients a way of getting out of insuperable difficulties. Remember the suicide of Brutus, how here at Philippi he fell on his sword. A Roman whose life was forfeit would take poison without thinking of anything but how he might rid himself of his pursuers; and in this case the jailor's life was not worth an hour's purchase if his prisoners had escaped.

vv. 28—30. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. And he called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

"To be saved." We must not put a too high interpretation on "saved"; but yet it is possible that the jailor knew

how they came there, and what the girl had said. Now that he was saved from committing suicide, and stood before the people whom he had put into the stocks, he knew that for their sakes the earthquake came, he knew that there was something supernatural about them, they had overcome the python power. His idea of "being saved" would grow; "What must I do to be saved?" he asked.

v. 31. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

Sympathy of Paul; the turn given to the jailor's ἵνα σωθῶ (that I may be saved).

This was a higher kind of "saving" than he had meant—but at this moment the man was disposed to listen.

vv. 32, 33. "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately."

"The word of the Lord."

They were baptized, not without instruction. What a few hours they must have had for instruction, yet S. Paul was able to take hold of it.

"Washed their stripes," probably in the spring which flowed through the prison. He washed their stripes, they washed him from his sins in the same font: he washed the blood from their stripes, they washed him in the blood of the Lamb.

v. 34. "Having believed in God." "God"; this must have been a strange expression to the jailor and his family. God must have been a new idea to them: they had had gods before, and some they had despised, and some they had hated, but they had never heard of God.

τῷ Θεῷ (in God). Now he knew Who and what God was.

v. 35. "But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants (or lictors) saying, Let those men go."

The night had passed, the magistrates did not take the same view they had done at first of the mob demonstration; they thought their own action had been hasty, and that there might be an inquiry into it; they were getting nervous; perhaps they had some shame at having so misused strangers. 'Those wretched Jews,' they thought, 'will be glad enough to slip away; they have had enough, they won't do it again.'

Now the Lictors, "Rather hasty yesterday, but! O these wretched Jews will be glad enough to be off out of the town."

v. 36. "And the jailor reported the words to Paul, saying,

The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace."

"In peace"; perhaps the jailor now had a new idea of what was meant by "peace."

"Romans!" an indignant, piled-up sentence.

vv. 37, 38. "But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans."

The new nervousness —"if convicted incapable of magistracy again."

S. Luke reports how the magistrates feared when they heard that the men they had beaten were Romans; and well they might be afraid, for if the accusation had been brought against them and they had been convicted, they would have been incapable of holding the magistracy for the rest of their lives; no man could hold it who had beaten Romans uncondemned.

vv. 39, 40. "And they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

Did any novelist or any historian ever tell his tale with more shortness and power than this? The lictors' report; the praetors' nervousness, which becomes terror when they know what they have done; they must come down, the prisoners are brought out; the magistrates say to them, 'We are in your hands, we were all wrong yesterday, it was a mistake, we can only ask you to go away.'

Apologetic visit and special request.

Lydia's house, brethren there—no hurry.

Even then S. Paul would not move without dignity; though he is quite willing that the praetors should not suffer for their mistake, he will not go straight out of the city, departing in ignominy: he goes to take leave of the brethren. He goes, but with judgment—judgment which shines out in every part of S. Paul's life.

The power of Mattins for imprisoned and sleeping souls.

Think what a power Mattins may be. Even if sometimes only two people are met together in the Church, what a power of releasing their Mattins has. We need not think that a

clergyman may as well shut up his church because there is no one to go. The prisoners were asleep when the Apostles began to say the Psalms.

I must mention a curious observation in Law's *Serious Call*[1], for there is a great deal in the idea. He entreats people to say their private devotions *aloud* or to chant the Psalms or hymns. Try and see if the words and thoughts of the Psalms are not more effective so than if you put the book before you and merely run your eye over it.

Philippi was the first town in Europe in which the Apostles preached; there was much to shew afterwards for their mission here, which began by speaking to a few women gathered by the riverside, by restoring a half-insane girl to sanity, which again resulted in the beating of the Apostles, and the baptism of a few disciples; and that was the end. But this was the foundation of a Church so holy, so full of power that the Epistle to the Philippians is the only Epistle in which S. Paul has no severe word for those to whom he writes; the one Epistle which is only overflowing thankfulness.

Fruitful visit—Epistle to Philippians.

The manufacturers, the religious talk-mongers—who corresponded to the newspapers of our times—the officers, the police, all these classes had had a seed lodged in them which burst out into the beautiful harvest of the Church.

S. Luke, with the modesty which he always shews, disappears here again without a word (*v.* 40). "*They* went out"; and so he goes on till, in ch. xx. *v.* 5, he again says "we" when S. Paul was again at Philippi. Thus it seems that Luke just stayed quietly behind at Philippi, not having been an object of the demonstration of the mob, and carried on the work of S. Paul. Notice the beautiful way in which he passes in and out with "we" and "they."

Luke out of sight again, till xx. 5 at Philippi still.

Then a word for ourselves. S. Paul does not baptize the jailor or Lydia only, but their whole households; moreover, although he is teaching every moment, even while he is taking food, he does not leave the converts without baptizing them. How can we think then that baptism means

The Baptisms of those two Houses.

[1] *A Serious Call to a devout and holy Life*, by William Law, ch. xv. [Law, *Works*, vol. IV. p. 146, ed. 1893.]

nothing but giving names; a mere proclamation of faith; a mere enrolment of members; that could have been done by writing them down in a memorandum book; or was there something spiritual given in answer to a faith and repentance? Surely there was some deep, abiding blessing. The last words of Christ before His Ascension were about baptism. Should we not find our daily life raised if we would look back on our baptism, and make our children think of it?

Self-Exorcism. We give ourselves sage, convenient answers in our perplexities.

The Pythoness: each of us is a Pythoness to ourselves. We have a convenient power of giving oracles that suit us. We are perpetually in doubt what words to say, what to do. Do we inquire within our own consciousness in the things we do? In the sage airs which we give ourselves, are we careful to think first what part of us they come from? Do they come from the flesh—that which urges us to get through difficulties in the most comfortable way we can, or do they come from that part of us which says "You must be in God"?

From which part of our nature and character do they come?

We have our yearnings to "be saved." How do we meet them?

If it is true that two answers are perpetually coming, one high, divine; the other low, sensual; will we not do for ourselves what S. Paul did for this girl and use self-exorcism in Christ's name?

You don't believe this, perhaps, but you will find it is true if you will only lay hold of it, and say to yourselves as S. Paul said to the low, grovelling, self-seeking, pleasure-seeking part of the girl, "Go out of her."

Suffering borne with Hymns is Liberty "for us and for many."

What do we learn for ourselves from the Apostles? They will not give up, they bear suffering with singing. Do you remember Keble's poem for Tuesday in Holy Week, "Wish not, dear friends, my pain away"? Do you remember how Christ refused to take the stupefying draught, and would bear all that He might feel for all? So the Apostles would not part with one single torture that comes to them; they will not say, "Why should I be tormented thus, what have I done to deserve it?" They will bear all with singing, though it is midnight; and it is thus that liberty comes to themselves and all the other prisoners, of whom that horrid place was

full, for such places were always full of misery, suffering, and shame and all horrors.

While the Apostles held the attention of the sufferers with their singing, suddenly all bands were loosed.

Evidently S. Paul could not think it right silently to forego his status, because he had work to do from that status.

There is one other point. There are few people who read this story with intelligence for the first time who have not been startled with S. Paul's self-assertion; with the way in which he stands on his dignity as a Roman; how he refuses to go when the magistrates tell him he may go. Why did he do this? Evidently because he thought it was not right in the service of Christ to sacrifice his status of Roman citizenship: it was not right to throw away the place which it gave him among the Roman citizens. S. Paul had no other thought but Christ, and to use the existing relations of society in the name of Christ. He could not have gone to the Thessalonians with the right and power of speaking to the people if he had given up his Roman citizenship. Of course there are certain positions now which are evidently given in the same way; but what we must lay to heart is that *every* position is a distinct gift from Christ, to be accounted for. Every position, every title, every piece of riches, every acre of ground comes sealed with His seal, and has to be given to Christ. If not, if it is possible for us to be of the Christian religion, and yet to use worldly things in a worldly way, it is not the same religion as that which S. Paul held. S. Paul would use his rank as a Roman citizen for Christ; but it is no more the same religion if we think it is possible for us to have title, rank, possessions, castles, lakes, houses, statues, and to use them apart from Christ; you had better give up being Christians if you think this; don't call yourselves Christians at all, but call yourselves half-Christians; say, *civis Romanus sum*, but not *Christianus sum.*

Some positions evidently given to be a vantage ground. But so were all, for Christ, though in different ways.

Use existing Conditions of Society and even Privileges for Christ.

If we do not is ours the same religion?

How do our days go? What is the day spent on? Does it begin with late rising, go on with little cares, or resting, luncheon, afternoon calls, a drive, resting again, and then the evening's engagement? Has such a day gone in a Christian way?

Is a Society Day a Christian Day?

What has happened? Many things have been done; but

has what is spiritual in feeling and tone sanctified the day? What part has been for the world, and what for Christ?

"What part has been for Christ?" An awful question; life and death hang on it, and all that is beyond. If S. Paul teaches that the positions of society are to be used for Christ, we must find out how a day in London can be made a Christian day and used for Christ.

XXXVI.

June 11th, 1890.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xvii. 1—13. *The Free Town and the Quiet Place.*

Thessalonica and Beroea. A Double Picture. Contrast of Attitude.

Thessalonica. Commerce; government; Jewish section.

Paul's Method. Poverty (Phil. iii. 8), Independence (1 Th. v. 6, 2 Th. iii. 7, 8), Straightness (2 Th. ii. 3, 4), Gentleness (1 Th. ii. 9).

Organisation begun at once (1 Th. v. 12).

Topic. A suffering Christ; to return. The Dead. Idleness.

Effect. Jews: Women of rank: Greek Men.

Popular attack on false charge, 'Treason,' through the Municipal Magistrates (Title, "Politarchs") makes many Confessors.

Beroea "devium." The Contrast.

Christian Nobility; Inquiry *versus* Prejudice. Women here also.

[Misrepresentation. Persecution less dangerous than Ease.]

We are now following the course of Christ in the Towns: in the Military Colony; the Free Town and the Quiet Place; and in the University Town. As the Apostles proceed through these towns we see the knowledge of Christ gradually spreading into Europe. They left behind the noble Church founded in the military colony of Philippi, a Church for

which, as we said before, S. Paul in his Epistle has no word of blame.

We pass on to-day to a pair of towns, Thessalonica and Beroea (*vv.* 1—10 and 10—16); and we finally leave S. Paul at Athens.

These two towns give us a double picture; our lesson to-day is the contrast of the temper of the two communities, or rather of the religious body in the two communities.

Thessalonica (so-called after the daughter of Philip of Macedon, the wife of Cassander) was a Greek free town, quite different from the "Little Rome" of the military colony, for it had its own customs, and native as well as Roman magistrates. It was moreover a huge commercial town of much importance. Beroea was a quiet little country place up towards the mountains, thirty miles off the main road.

Our picture to-day double; our lesson the contrast: the temper of two communities.

But the contrast was not in these facts; in both towns the impression left was that the Church of the future was mainly Gentile. But in both there was a large religious community who devoutly received the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Then came the Interpreters; and here is the contrast—the way in which the two communities received the Interpretation. These two tempers are permanent.

vv. 1, 2. "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures."

S. Paul arrived then at Thessalonica, still suffering from the scourging he had received, such flogging as we hesitate to apply, footsore and weary after his journey of 30 miles in the day, from Philippi. This journey he had probably made, as he often did, on foot, through Amphipolis and Apollonia, which lay on the Via Egnatia.

Thessalonica a huge commercial town.

Unlike the military colony where the Jews had no full privileges, he found here a synagogue including many leading men among the Jews who were naturally drawn to this heart of commerce; this was the most populous town in Macedonia and the walls of the city measured five miles round. The

proconsul of the province had his seat there. The *Salonike* of to-day contains many Jews.

The 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians was written a few weeks after S. Paul left the town, and the Epistle makes clear the spirit in which his teaching was received, "in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost": then follows what seems like exaggerated language, which was in reality no exaggeration, that the Thessalonians had become "an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia[1]." The passage illustrates the character of the locality; from a great commercial centre like Thessalonica, with Jewish merchants coming and going and vessels sailing to every port, there was naturally a dispersion of the truth, and S. Paul continues, "For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth." Such a statement could not apply to Ephesus or Colosse.

Paul allowed to go on three sabbaths.

S. Paul began his work among the Jews, preaching in the synagogue "three Sabbath days"; we do not know for certain from this expression whether the work would continue through two or three weeks. His preaching is described as "reasoning with them from the Scriptures." We must consider his method of work under three aspects; the organisation; his topic; and the effect of his work.

The organisation began at once; S. Paul says to the Thessalonians[2] "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you."

His topic was the "Suffering Christ,"—it "behoved Christ to suffer," 'He was *bound* to suffer[3].' This was in contradiction to the Jewish idea of the Messiah; they were looking for the glory of the Messiah, the new David was not to suffer; so they ignored the sufferings of the Messiah predicted by the prophets; and some imagined that two Messiahs were to be looked for, a suffering Messiah, and the Messiah

[1] 1 Thess. i. 6—8.

[2] 1 Thess. v. 12. [3] Acts xvii. 3.

triumphant. Thus S. Paul chose this subject, the Suffering and the Resurrection: proving it from the Scriptures.

v. 3. "Opening and alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ."

Thus the second subject was the life of Jesus, and the proclamation of Him as Messiah.

What was the effect of S. Paul's preaching?

v. 4. "And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

These devout Greeks were a most educated and cultured class, far more educated than the Jews; they were dissatisfied with heathenism; their religion was worldly and sensual and they sought for a beauty more intellectual and more moral.

The Jewish religion had a moral beauty of which the Greeks' religion taught them nothing; and there was a greatness and divinity brooding even over the beliefs of the wilder and simpler tribes, a belief in God whether known or unknown, which implied something higher than the worldly and sensual religion of the Greeks. These *devout* Greeks were turning to something truer and higher.

The Jews were moved to jealousy on account of the conversion of the women.

Touches of his ways in his letters to the converts after.

If we study passages from S. Paul's subsequent letters to his converts we get many vivid touches of his ways.

Honesty of Address.

In 1 Thess. v. 12 S. Paul shews them that those who preached the Gospel to them had nothing to gain for themselves thereby; they taught without flattery, or secret gain (1 Thess. ii. 3—5). And again (i. 5) he shews in what spirit they lived and taught. 1 Thess. ii. 7 is one of the most beautiful verses, and shews the deep personal affection of S. Paul, the tenderness of the Teacher.

Gentleness.

Now penniless.

From the account in the Acts we see that S. Paul was now penniless. How had this happened, for he had been well off? When he was cast into prison at Philippi he had lost all he had, for this fine was the punishment for practising an unlawful religion. In the Epistle to the

Philippians iii. 8 he says he was "fined all." Thus security was taken from Jason as Paul himself had nothing to offer.

How then was he supported during his teaching? Did he say 'the disciples must maintain us'? In 1 Thess. ii. 9 he tells them to "remember our labour and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God." Philippi alone sent "once and again to his relief," sent a distance of 100 miles, and Paul accepted the offering; otherwise he maintained himself in independence by his own handicraft, for it was the custom of every Jew to learn a trade. (2 Thess. iii. 7, 8.)

His independence. His handicraft.

Imagine then the picture; the Apostles still suffering "as it behoved Christ to suffer," and unfolding joy in suffering; "opening the Scriptures" and exemplifying them, as they worked "night and day" in some small workshop, busy with their hands and teaching those who surrounded them and who came to seek something more than their own religion offered —a life beyond the grave.

To all appearance the Apostles had not much success among the Jews: but much more with the Greeks and the women. S. Paul must have stayed some time here for he was able to pick out and appoint those who were to carry on the work. (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.)

Not much success with Jews. But with Greeks and chief women.

Now what was the topic that produced these effects? 'that the Messiah was bound to suffer, and that this Messiah is the Jesus of whom I am telling you.' It was this that excited the anger of the Jews,—the doctrine of a suffering Christ, of a Christ who had come and gone. This destroyed their watchword and so their political unity and importance.

The topic. (1) Kingship, a Suffering Christ,

Moreover by the whole tenor of the Epistles we see that he taught that this Jesus—the Crucified—was to return; it is curious that he mentions this in the verses which close each of our first four chapters of the first Epistle.

(2) Advent —to return. This excited anger of the Jews.

But this doctrine appealed to many among the Greeks in virtue of the human element of love and of sympathy in suffering, because it was the teaching not of a Prince but a

This pleased the Greeks. Yes! for it was human. Yes! for it was holy.

Sufferer, a human heart at the throne of God: and it was a teaching of holiness, unlike the rites of their religion.

Thus where the Jews failed to learn, the Greeks rejoiced in the teaching of a God of holiness. As when a chemist pours into a solution some liquid that can separate the elements, and the same thing has on the different elements two opposite effects, so this pure doctrine at once separated the Jews and Greeks, hardening the Jews while the Greeks truly seek the Saviour and find Him.

The Jews resort to the basest of weapons, to ἀγοραῖοι,

Then the Jews resort to the basest of weapons; trying to stop the teaching by setting the city in an uproar against the teachers. They went to the market-place where, as in our own day, the idlers, loafers, and unemployed collect and hang about. But even our idlers' corners, or bridges, are nothing to the market-places of old days where people of all nations, and the scum of them all would collect. Greek comic literature shews us what these were like. The Jews went to stir up such men to do what, for very shame, they dared not do themselves.

v. 5. "But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people."

to a charge the opposite of his teaching, yet based on the doctrine of 'His' coming.

And the charge they brought to stir up the city against Paul was true to the letter, but in the impression the absolute contradiction of Paul's teaching—that Paul was preaching a new kind of King.

vv. 6, 7. "And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, *one* Jesus."

Julian Laws of treason.

The charge they were bringing against him would have proved him guilty of treason; for the Julian laws, the "decrees of Cæsar" punished with severity any offence, the most trivial, against an Emperor, even such an offence as throwing mud on the statue of a former Emperor, or desecrating an imperial

coin. The *Annals* of Tacitus are full of the wretched effects of these laws.

Note S. Paul's indifference to misrepresentation. He makes no complaint; he had lodged the truth in the hearts of devout men and women, and that was enough for him. Yet when we suffer under misrepresentation we feel that we cannot endure it; misunderstanding is galling—we must at least have fair weapons.

Do not care so much about misrepresentation. "He will make thy righteousness as clear as the light," if it *is* righteousness.

There is a beautiful warning in the writings of the old saint Jeremy Taylor—one that often occurs to one's mind, "Whatsoever evil thou sayest of thyself, be content that others should think to be true; and if thou callest thyself fool, be not angry if another say so of thee[1]."

S. Paul's strength was such that even misrepresentation did not provoke or trouble him; and such should be our strength.

Jason was a Jew, therefore his name would have been either Joshua or Jesus; Jews living among Gentiles took Gentiles' names like in sound to their own. Jason the hero of the Argonauts was a local hero, and a certain association of importance would attach to the name. Bishop Scott told me lately of a parallel custom in China; all Europeans find it necessary to take one of the few hundred Chinese family names, and naturally every man chooses that which is nearest in sound to his own, and preferably one well-known to those among whom he is living.

vv. 8, 9. "And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go."

"The Rulers of the City,"—the Greek title is in one word —the "Politarchs"; and in this title we have another of those bright touches which so confirm the truth of the narrative. The title was nowhere known; it was not found in Aristotle's *Politics*, which gives whole lists of the magisterial titles in Greek cities and even such a title as "Politophylakes" used at Larissa only[2]. There are only two places where the title

Politarchs.

[1] *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living:* on Humility.

[2] Arist. *Pol.* VIII. 6.

Politarch has ever yet been found, and one of these is in an inscription, giving the names of seven Politarchs on a triumphal Arch which stood in the main street of Salonike[1].

Beroea *oppidum devium*, "off the road."

Beroea was a very different place from Thessalonica; its proper name was Pheroea, but the Macedonian lisp or burr turned it into Beroea. Cicero, speaking against Piso, says that he was so hated in Macedonia that he was obliged to fly by night to Thessalonica; and being pursued, fled again and took refuge in Beroea, *avoiding the main road*[2]."

Thus when Thessalonica became too hot to hold Paul and Silas they were sent to Beroea, where they hoped Paul would be hidden—vainly, for here again the Jews followed him.

vv. 10—13. "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honourable estate, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Beroea also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes."

The contrast of Thessalonica and Beroea is that of prejudice and inquiry, they searched daily,—"many of them *therefore* believed"; the truth was plain.

εὐγενέστεροι—Christian idea of Aristocratic quality.

The word for "noble," means more literally well-born, and implies a nobility of mind, freedom from prejudice, freedom of inquiry to find out truth; a mind generous, ingenuous, loyal in cleaving to truth. This is the ideal of nobility at which we must aim, not desirous to please men, but God, which proveth the hearts, according to the principle which

[1] This inscription was bought by the British Museum in 1854. Cf. Newton: *Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*, 1883; and Böckh, *Corp. Inscr. Gr.*, No. 1967. Among the names are Sopater, Gaius, Secundus. Cf. Acts xix. 29, xx. 4. For the other mention of Politarchs, cf. L. Heuzey, *Mission archéologique de Macédoine*, p. 315.

[2] Cic. c. Pison. c. 36.

S. Paul gives; this is the Christian idea of the quality of aristocracy.

Among these people were not only a good many men, but, as at Thessalonica, the foremost women were among the first to believe (*v.* 4), so here are mentioned the Greek women of honourable estate. The Greek word εὐσχημόνης means literally, as one antient writer says, one who perfectly performs the figures of an ancient dance, with movements graceful, quiet, and majestic[1]. Transfer these qualities into the moral region, and you will have a character which takes pains perfectly to rule thought and feeling, a character graceful and decorous. Thus again it does not mean as another writer says, one who has many possessions (though it is used of one who is rich—namely Joseph of Arimathea, Mk. xv. 43). This then is the idea that S. Luke brings out, the frankness of fine breeding, the true ideal of womanly life, for women are more fearless, more free, more loyal in mind than men.

Women—more fearless, free, and resolute.

Now to turn to the lessons for ourselves; one lesson was of indifference to misrepresentation; one was of womanly loyalty; one was of nobility. But the lesson from the two cities is simply the contrast of Scripture reading and not reading. Surely this is very impressive; this book is criticised, do you know the critique or the book? Where do you stand? As critics with the Thessalonians, or as Scripture readers with the Beroeans?

How shewn? a daily ἀνάκρισις of texts. The Contrast—Scripture reading and not reading.

But now finally mark this: it was possible after all to be a greater Christian in Thessalonica than in Beroea; to be a better Christian in the noisy, busy city, where it was hard to be a Christian at all, than in the quiet mountain place where it was easy. Persecution has less danger than ease. There is no Epistle to the Beroeans, but there are two to the Thessalonians.

Persecution less danger than Ease.

In conclusion then I would ask you all to study during the next fortnight these two Epistles to the Thessalonians; first reading each Epistle straight through; then daily taking

[1] Hesych. εὐσχήμονες· εὐσχημόνως καὶ εὖ σχήματα ἐν ὀρχήσει ποιοῦντες. εὐσχημόνως· εὐλαβῶς.

one chapter with its notes according to the arrangement given[1]. So try before next meeting really to grasp this literature; to find out what sort of Christians those were to whom it was written; to note the beautiful Christian character of the letters, the self-imposed industry of the teacher, his tenderness to living and dead; the strength, love and confidence of the Epistles.

[1] The Archbishop advised that the Epistles should be read through as follows: On each of the first two days following the Address the 1st Epistle to be read; on each of the next four days, one chapter of the Epistle with notes. On the next day the 1st Epistle again; on the day following the 2nd Epistle. On each of the next three days one chapter of the Second Epistle, and on the following day the Second Epistle again.

XXXVII.

June 25th, 1890.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xvii. 14—21. *The University Town.*

Athens and S. Paul—

Its perfections. His loneliness, unselfishness.

Wise liberality of Romans to such a City of Memories.

Antient University Life;—"Religious;" Leisure: Conversation abreast of the times.

17. The 'Agora' a feature of Society new to S. Paul. His instant use of it. His Dialogues and the conversationalists.

18. *Epicureans.* Pursuit of True Pleasure indicated by the Senses. Physics the remedy for Superstition. Materialism supervening.

Its Truths: anti-polytheism: Body a part of our Nature: Individual maintained against Fate.

19. *Stoics.* Its great men and Christianlike maxims: But really Egoism: rested on pride: Fate: Final ruin: the contrary of Humility: Faith: Providence: Resurrection.

Its Truths. Fatherhood of God: Unity of Man: Soul supreme.

20, 21. Their sarcasms and also S. Luke's: 'This seed-picker.'

22. This 'Areopagus' proceeding literary, not legal.

Christ face to face with Intellectual Force, Moral Pride, Material Pleasure.

The Situation not without parallel: out of date now.

You remember how the Thessalonian Jews came in pursuit of the Apostles, to the quiet place Beroea, where all was going well and stirred up the multitude with the same topics as at Thessalonica. Those about S. Paul dared not subject him to another attack, delicate as he was, and with his wounds scarcely healed, so they sent him away.

v. 14. "And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still."

v. 15. "But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed."

Here he was alone, and of course he desired the company of Silas and Timotheus.

v. 16. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols."

The sublimest man in the sublimest place.

S. Paul's going to Athens at all was, so to speak, an accident; and through this 'accident' we have here the sublimest man in the sublimest place—Paul at Athens. You know Raphael's conception of this scene, the majestic figure, the temples sketched from imagination, the rows of philosophers, some listening, some scorning. But Athens as it actually was had the most perfect architecture, and most perfect sculpture, combined to absolute perfection in the most beautiful manner. The great temple of the virgin goddess was the envy and the model of all ages: there rose up a most beautiful rock, on the top of which stood the Parthenon, and all the way up were clustered smaller temples, among them the little temple of Victory ornamented with trophies of the wars with the Persians; and towering even higher than the temple was the bronze statue of the goddess with a spear in her hand, which served as a landmark for the sailors out at sea.

For about one hundred years the place was in its glory; and in that time it ran through every possible form of constitution—absolute monarchy, oligarchy, democracy of various

kinds; through all it never lost its greatness. Then with the tremendous crash it was removed for ever from political influence, yet left in its beauty. All philosophy dates from Athens; the same hundred years founded in the West all the science of the laws of thought. The world has never seen such a period of genius; has never seen such political thought, has never seen such appreciation of beauty, or such power of casting it into reality.

The Athenians loved the city beyond expression; their oaths were by their forefathers who established Athens by dying for it; they believed the favour of heaven was on it day and night. In their poetry—which is itself the perfection of poetry—there is one chorus by one of their sweetest poets, in which it is said that the Athenians went as if they were stepping through the brightest ether—the sunlight of Athens was beyond any other.

The loneliness of the man in the place.

Here then S. Paul was alone, and his loneliness drove him to walk about the city. See here the note of unselfishness, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (iii. 1), where he is writing back from Athens; for when Silas did not come, as he desired, but stayed at Beroea, while Luke was at Philippi, Paul did not like to hear of the congregation at Thessalonica being left without a leader; and although he had wanted Timothy to come to him "with all speed," he sent him back to comfort the Church[1].

Yet when Timothy came sent him back at once to the Church in trouble.

I remember being once with a remarkable person in sight of glorious mountains, when the sun was going down. I said how natural it was that people who had no revelation should worship the hills. And my friend said, "And yet we have the knowledge that we ourselves are greater than all that we see." The human soul coming from God and going back to Him is greater than all beside.

He was sublimer than the place.

Glorious as Athens was then S. Paul was sublimer. The man was all God's, he represented God, he had a message from God to the world;—but the city was full of idols[1].

The man was all God's.

The place κατείδωλος.

[1] Cf. also 1 Thess. ii. 17—20.

Boast of Athens was [to be a] Religious City.

"He was provoked," brought to a paroxysm of passion, as he beheld the city all be-idoled. It was a strange thing; there were so many statues of gods that there was a proverb that it was easier in these days to find a god than a man. The greatest period of Athenian history, the outburst of its philosophy, its art, was 400 years before this time; the city had not lost its appreciation, but its originality; it had gone on memorialising, and commemorating, until it was "fuller of gods than of men." So there were statues of gods of qualities, to which sacrifices were offered—of modesty, of pity, of persuasion, of impulse; these were worshipped as independent beings, not as the qualities of God; if for instance a person wanted to rouse himself,—felt disposed to enter upon an enterprise but wanted the divine sting to action, he worshipped Impulse. There were gods also of every nation under the sun; and all along the streets figures of Hermes to point the way; there were statues of heroes, and of living people; there were many altars and over some of these altars were strange inscriptions; no altar "to the unknown God" has been found, but various accounts of such are given, and different reasons for the dedication. One altar to "the unknown God" is mentioned by the ancient geographers as standing in the road that comes up from the port of Piraeus; and others elsewhere. Various interpretations are given of it by the antients themselves; some say that these altars were raised because of some great benefit received, and that those who dedicated them did not know to what god to ascribe it; and again it is said that there was a pestilence through Athens, and a great seer ordered the Athenians to drive sheep out, and wherever the sheep lay down, to sacrifice and raise an altar to 'the unknown god.' And there are still other accounts[1].

Wise liberality of Romans to such a city of memories.

But we shall not understand the sermon unless we understand too what kind of people they were in Athens.

Rome, in the wisdom of its government, did not put Athens under Roman laws. The French system would have

[1] *τῷ προσήκοντι θεῷ*, see pp. 424, 425.

been to re-name the town, and change the dedication of all the churches as the finest way of establishing the French Empire. Romans thought that the finest way was to leave everything as much as possible as it was. Athens was to be a free city; they kept up the Areopagus, and though its function was almost gone, they established a council of 600 men, allowed the popular assembly, and handed over to it certain things to manage. We do not do things in this way; some of our politicians desire to change the names of magistrates, in which the pride of the people is wrapped up; so also in things which concern the Church; many desire to establish a uniformity beyond which no one must go, up to which everyone must come. The Romans knew that uniformity did not mean unity, and that unity does not require uniformity; they preferred a unity of gratitude below the surface; thus they left the democratic assembly, the old Six Hundred, for they knew that in this way they should have happier and wiser subjects. In the same manner when Germanicus came to Athens instead of coming with pomp he was content to go about with one lictor, so that the Athenians might feel that the glory of the city was such that he could keep no pomp in Athens[1].

Areopagus, Antient court of religion.

The Areopagus was the antient court of religion and could have punished with death anyone who taught a new religion; but no Roman citizen of course could be put to death by the Areopagus. Then Athens was a University; everyone at Athens was, so to speak, at the University; everyone took an interest in all that was going on. We may compare the condition of things to that which missionaries find now among the Assyrian Christians; even after centuries of oppression, during which no justice could be obtained in the small courts for the Christians; while even now their bishops are working in the fields for their livelihood, the boys in the school at Urmi may be seen disputing earnestly about religion—on the doctrine of the third Person of the Trinity or the nature of Christ, in the old metaphysical way; the religious spirit of their forefathers comes back directly the people have an

[1] Tac. *Ann.* ii. 53.

A very popular University—with circles and Clubs rather than Colleges.

opportunity of developing it. So it was at Athens; all who came had a philosophical turn of mind, and the scholars were in clubs rather than colleges; men were always discussing abstract and difficult subjects. We can hardly realise such a condition of things, for with us such gifts are few and far between; but here it was the whole people who were endowed with these talents, who brought the abundance of their life and energy to study and disputation. It was a land of professors, where all could enjoy themselves, study philosophy and religion absolutely free from self-sacrifice. They had abundance of worship but without sacrifice; the cross had no part in their religion, which was pure enjoyment in the glorious air of Athens with the glorious outlook over the sea.

And see what it all came to. There were the rhetoricians, people who studied the art of persuasion; there were many ladies too from all parts of the world, philosophical ladies who had a turn for mystical religions. S. Luke makes a sharp remark: "Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there had leisure for nothing else than to hear or to tell some new thing." You know how sarcastic such people grow; but S. Luke uses also a little sarcasm here. These people who have abundant leisure for speculation and plentiful means of enjoyment are always the people who feel that their verdict settles everything, especially when as in Athens at that time there was no influence of any very great spirit resident among them as had been the case at some other periods in Athens.

Leisure abundant, no time except for inquiry.

One great institution was the ἀγορά.

There was one great institution at Athens—the Agora, or market-place. The market-place was the very centre of the antient life at Athens, and the place first of political then of social and philosophical discussion; law business was done here; most of the marketing indeed had at that time been pushed out of it. The original Agora was a beautiful little square, cloistered on two sides; on the east side rose a great flight of stairs, leading up the hill with little temples on the way, and crowned by the Parthenon on the top. The Agora had become the lounge for the thoughtful, happy, religious people; in the city about the Agora were a very large number of places comfortable to sit in, or little arbours, called λέσχαι,—

places for talking in; some were in the market-place and the rest all about the city. One must remember that books were few and costly, that there were no papers, but here was a perpetual conversazione. One cloister was famous for a great picture. And here walked one sect of philosophers, followers of Zeno, called Stoics, from the Greek word στοά or "porch." The Agora—more business-like then than at this time,—was the place where Socrates used to sit, and by his wonderful language attract the passer-by, getting him to enter into conversation, and, professing his own ignorance, entangle him in a dialogue, make him feel the inefficiency of his argument, and set him on the way to truth. S. Paul must have known something of Socrates, his loneliness, his martyr's death.

This was where Socrates had done his work.

But this was quite a new feature in life to S. Paul. No place he had been in had anything corresponding to an Agora—a talking-place; he must instantly make use of it.

This was to S. Paul quite a new feature in life.

vv. 17, 18. "So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him. And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him."

What is the lesson to us of S. Paul's method in Athens?

Think of the contrast to all he had previously known: S. Paul brought up at Jerusalem where there was not one single statue, finds himself in a city peopled with statues; all men going up and down daily among them. He does not instantly say, "What a contrast to the people of God," but he goes and takes his place among their institutions, becoming "a Greek to the Greeks." Here is a lesson to us in what is such a wearying part of our work in London. How many people feel that committees waste their time, spoil their energies, proposing what is never carried out; yet this is the method of work of the present age. Had we not better take the committees in the way that S. Paul took the Agora and make as good a thing as we can out of the system?

He wisely let a new system into his work.

While he waited, seeing these glorious people moving about among their altars and images, he did not forget his countrymen, but reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath with

the Jews, and the "devout persons"—those namely who saw that the Jewish religion had something in it which the Greek had not; "and in the market-place he reasoned every day with them that met with him."—'with those that came along'; he "dialogued" with them like Socrates, threw himself into Greek life. S. Luke was not unjust in the sarcasm of *v.* 21. There was a Greek philosopher, Theophrastus by name, who wrote the first witty studies of character; one discourser is a talemaker who says, "Where do you come from? What have you to say? Have you anything fresh to say? Nothing fresher still?" What he wants to hear is "some new thing." And the other answers, "I have some very good news. I think I can feast you with news[1]." When Demosthenes is trying to rouse the Athenians he says in effect, 'Here you sit, doing nothing but sitting in the market and asking if there is anything new to tell.' S. Luke grasps this principal feature, though he may not have read Demosthenes or Theophrastus.

Who were the leading people to talk to?

Who were the leading people to talk to? Certain of the Epicureans and Stoic philosophers are good enough to be interested in the lonely looking Jew who is ready to talk.

τινὲς τῶν Ἐπικουρείων καὶ Στωϊκῶν φιλοσόφων were good enough to be interested.

Epicurus himself pursued true pleasure established by experience:

The Epicureans were the disciples of a sect founded by Epicurus, a man of holy, virtuous life. He had a garden in which he loved to speak with those who would talk the philosophy in which he delighted; he taught that the one thing for man to do was to cultivate "the energy which produced a happy life[2]"; he said that man could never tell what true pleasure was until he had lived, that it was established by experience, that the senses were the criterion of truth; he held that superstition and superstitious worship gave no real pleasure but only caused anxiety and terror as to whether enough had been done to propitiate gods ready to condemn; he taught that the cultivation of natural philosophy, the study of lightning and thunder, of the earthquakes, frees the mind from superstition; he believed that the gods had nothing to

the senses the criterion of truth:

natural philosophy as remedy for superstition:

[1] Theophrastus, Λογοπ., vii. ...*πόθεν σύ; κἂν λέγῃ τι, καὶ πῶς ἔχεις πέρα τοῦδε εἰπεῖν καινόν; καὶ ὡς ὑπολαβὼν ἐρωτᾷν;*... Ed. H. E. Foss (Teubner, Leipzig).

[2] *passim ap. Epicurea*, Edidit Hermann Usener; Leipzig 1887.

do with human nature, and the way it works itself out; that the right object of man is to keep himself free from superstition, to give himself to enjoyment, but to set that limit to pleasure which experience points out; he held that experience teaches that vice is no pleasure, and that the highest pleasure, the only pleasure worth having is the pursuit of truth and morality. Yet it was as pleasure that these were to be sought.

remoteness of God's interest.

There is no doubt that this was the doctrine of Epicurus himself, but it did not stand for one generation as he held it. The theory was not in itself materialistic, but it practically became so; and though some led beautiful lives in this belief, yet God seemed to them alien from our nature, and withdrawn in an existence altogether separate; if God existed, so the Epicureans held, He could not care for the life of man, any more than man could care for the life of the beast; and it was not worth while for man to think of the gods.

[Epicureanism] fell into materialism.

And those who followed Epicurus did not find that for themselves the pursuit of virtue was the highest enjoyment; they fell into coarse pleasures, so that Epicureanism led to the indulgence of the senses. Thus it had gone on getting more and more degraded, until the name of the great man is associated now with only the worst signification of pleasure.

By S. Paul's time it had become a popular philosophy; and though there were some Epicureans who had high ideas of life, for the most part the doctrine was a doctrine of eating and drinking.

Did Epicurus and all these great systems do no good? We see at once that they did; first, because they broke the yoke of polytheism; even after a few generations people were no longer disposed to believe in hosts of gods. If this doctrine taught that God was far from man yet it implied a lofty notion of God, an idea of Him as adorable.

In preparation for Christianity: [Epicureanism] (1) Weakened polytheism.

Again, in asserting that the body was part of the nature of man Epicureanism prepared the way for Christianity. We cannot be sure that the Jews had any notion of a future life. And most other philosophies taught that after death the body is dispensed with, and that immortality is only of the spirit.

(2) Asserted Body to be part of man's nature.

Epicureanism, whether it used the doctrine well or ill, taught that the body is part of human nature, and thus prepared a way for the belief in the Resurrection of the body.

(3) Asserted Individual against Fate.

And thirdly they asserted one noble thing, that fate was not to have its way with mankind, that mankind were not creatures of a destiny they could not help, but that every individual had his own life to live; and in this again preparation was made for Christianity.

Stoics. Series of great men.

The Stoics did almost more: there was a series of great men among the Stoics, but the one I shall specially speak of is the great Roman. If you delight yourselves by going to the British Museum, look at the bust of Marcus Aurelius, a sublime, sweet face, self-controlled, full of dignity, beauty and the sense of duty. Nothing gives a greater idea of what a heathen could be when he sought after God.

The Stoic doctrine is much more noble than the Epicurean; some theologians of our time cannot be persuaded [Stoicism] but that Seneca and Marcus Aurelius had studied St Paul[1], for the phrases used are sometimes so much alike, though they [Built on] Egotism: rest on different principles: we find such phrases as "*die daily*"; that "the Epicureans...*glory in their shame*," words that S. Paul uses of the same kind of people: and again one says, "to obey God is perfect freedom," or "will nothing but what God wills." But often when we look into it we find that rests on Pride: the rest of the passage is based on a mistaken principle, especially on the principle of pride in self, of pride in being as good as one can be, and from that standpoint despising those who are not like oneself. The evil of Stoicism is [teaches] Independence: Egotism. Man is to work out his own release. The true Stoic puts away all that he is ashamed of within, works out all that is noble, and reaches a height from which he looks with contempt on all who are lower; while he believes that Fate: the whole world below him is under a damning cruel fate; Cosmic Ruin. that every cycle of 1000 years throws all into ruin, and from that crisis history begins again.

Noble as it was, magnificent as were the characters it produced, Stoicism had to give way to Christianity.

[1] Cf. p. 654.

The pride of the Stoic was what he began with; Christianity on the other hand must be founded on the humility which recognises that we have nothing but what we receive. The independence of Stoicism, which was not to be broken with sorrow, which would endure all pain in order to create independence of character, is opposed to the faith by which we live—"Abide in me, and I in you—the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine"[1]; "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me[2]." The idea of a cruel fate is exactly opposed to the teaching of Christ, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father[3]." So final ruin is the exact opposite of the Resurrection and the Restitution of all things to the perfect ideal which God Himself has set before Himself.

Christianity [rests on] Humility:

[teaches] Faith:

Providence:

Resurrection.

But the Stoics too were doing the work of the preparation of Christianity; they taught that God was the Father of men, and cares for men, that all men were bound up together, so that, as one writer says, we ought not to say "I am a part" but "I am a member." Yet this feeling of the unity of men was not held, except by such a man as Marcus Aurelius, to be inconsistent with the cruel treatment of slaves.

Preparation for Christianity.

Fatherhood of God.

Mutual membership of men.

Again, there was a glorious preparation for Christianity in the doctrine that the soul was sovereign and set the law by which the body was to walk; that we had a supreme faculty to be our guide in all things, but that the body was full of deceit and those who lived according to its law deceived themselves.

Soul sovereign.

And this despised Jew was to take up the work that Stoics and Epicureans had begun and blot out the faults; and yet no particle of good that was in them was to be lost.

What was their view of the Jew? They would not have spoken to him but for the intelligence of his speech; they were sure he had a message, and their ear was caught by his quotations.

Their view of the intelligent Jew who seemed to have a message of his own.

Do you not see human nature peeping out in the remark: *v.* 18, "And some said, What would this babbler say? other

Contemptuousness of θέλοι.

[1] Jo. xv. 4. [2] Phil. iv. 13. [3] Matt. x. 29.

some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection."

The word babbler means literally *seedpicker*, this was what the hungry loafers were called who lived on what they could pick up from the ships. So they called S. Paul the "seedpicker"; he was a rambler come to pick up their precious seeds of philosophy, just as they imagined from his quotation that he picked up poetry.

Candour and Humour of Luke.

Is not there a great deal of candour and humour in S. Luke's writing? A person who was not a humourist would not give the very words, would only say that these philosophers despised Paul. We recognise the human brilliance of such writing.

"He preached Jesus and the resurrection." Some people think that the philosophers imagined Paul was preaching Resurrection, Ἀνάστασις, as a goddess; this seems an unnecessary supposition.

v. 19. "And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus,"

Not a trial.

These are the same words which are used of Barnabas, when he 'took him,' and brought him to the Apostles; the expression implies no idea of official arrest and hearing: when he had finished speaking he just went away from among them.

The Areopagus is unchanged. Anyone can stand where S. Paul stood; steps lead up from the Agora to a place where a stone is shewn as that on which S. Paul stood. The accuser and defendant in trials stood in this place where were two stones called, with the customary Greek humour, Insolence (ὕβρις) and Shamelessness (ἀναίδεια).

vv. 19, 20. "Saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."

The words are not of kind intention; they are stinging, sarcastic words of mock humility: "May we know? Are we able to know?"

v. 21. "Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourn-

ing there spent their time in (or, had leisure for) nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing."

Now stay and consider what parallel we have now to these old things. There are no people called Stoics and Cynics now, they do not exist; but are there not people who feel the dignity of human nature, and yet have no love for souls? And are not these some of our best? Are there not among us people like the Epicureans, who are living for the hour, because they are not sure that there is anything beyond? Men who say they look up to the sky but cannot tell if there is a God beyond it; who want a sign, a material sign; who say, "I get on well for the present, while I am young, happy, and enjoy myself, but I don't know how it will be when I begin to fail. Then I shall want religion; when that comes I will turn Roman Catholic." Is not that the state of mind of the Epicurean? "I do well for the present, but if a craving for more should begin I will bury myself in the most interesting superstition that I know. I will save myself the trouble of thinking now, and then I will not think for myself, I will not work out things for myself, but I will take the most self-assertive authority I know which will work out these things for me."

Intellectual Force. Moral Pride. Material Pleasure. Contempt. Polish.

These things are going on about us now; there is the same dominance of intellectual force, moral pride, material pleasure now, which there was in Athens then. They have a tendency to band themselves together and out of them comes contempt and polish. This contempt must be polished, it must be able to make itself fascinating.

Living on Memory of the Past—on Reputation; "the Religious City." Claim to be "Religious" by Agnostic, like claim to be "Catholic" by Dissenter.

Then there is the same tendency to cherish contempt of other characteristics; a tendency to live in the past, on the reputation of forefathers. Read the newspapers of the present day, and see how much there is too, of interest in religion. It is those who have no religion who take most interest in it, as it is dissenters who call themselves "unsectarian."

What do you think of the picture of souls in this condition; feeling dimly after truth yet not seeing what is good, not feeling the witness but saying either "I must go sternly in my own way"; or on the other hand, "We had better live while we

may." Anyone may be in this condition. It is sad and strange; on the one hand there was no place so glorious as Athens; on the other hand no place so wicked as Corinth, so vulgar as Thessalonica, nor so much set up with local pride as Philippi; yet S. Paul yearned to go back to these places; but to Athens he never went back; there were few people there who followed him; for it was not a place where humility and faith could flourish.

There is nothing more touching; a sublime man, in a sublime place, which he never cared again to visit.

What says Christ to people in this frame? Has He a message?

Next time we shall see what Christ had to say to people in this frame of mind. But we have this comfort. If He did not accomplish the work by S. Paul at this time, He did work all, Epicureanism and Stoicism, into the perfect holiness.

XXXVIII.

July 9th, 1890.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xvii. 22—34. *The University Town* (*continued*).

Athens. S. Paul's Speech—
Athenian Piety. Its degeneracy. Its 'Agnostic' deity.

24. Paul turns them to the Personal God.

25. Stephen's protest about Jerusalem applied to Athens—Isaiah's also.

26. Evolution and Ethnography and the rest allowed for, and more still to be found out.

27. To seek...grope...find...a not far off God...in Him...His Offspring.

28. The insight of the Poets recognised.

29. What follows from this as to True Worship?

Why does Paul work this up for men who must have known it?

Because of their responsibility for the Society of which they were leaders.

Religion not a well-conceived myth for bettering mankind, but a divine introduction to the Real World.

30. To do away the long-standing contradictions (1) God provides *one new Fact* in Nature and Humanity—viz. Christ Jesus, (2) And states a Responsibility for us which Death will not affect.

The excellent courtesy of the University and the few touched.

Our specifics for 'elevating the masses' are but fragments of real Athens.

The Church and You.

v. 22. "And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious."

S. Paul begins his speech in the accustomed way; it is a stroke of cleverness that he addressed them as Demosthenes, or any of their orators would: "Men of Athens." We will take the speech bit by bit.

"I perceive that ye are somewhat over-religious."

Both Schools would agree, "good beginning."

The Athenians proud of being θεοσεβεῖς "very much given to the fear of spirits." But this has a *not* complimentary undertone.

This was a good beginning; the Athenians prided themselves on Athens being a religious city; and the word Paul uses means strictly fearers of deities or demons—demons not in the sense in which we use it, but in the sense of genii presiding over good and bad qualities, supernatural beings, sometimes mischievous; it was thought that each man was controlled by a good and a bad spirit. Thus the word has an undertone not complimentary, which would be appreciated both by Epicureans and Stoics, who agreed in rejecting such superstition—a religion very good, as they would think, for the vulgar.

"Actually here an unknown one adored."

v. 23. "For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you."

"The objects of your worship." You all know how when one comes out of some glorious foreign cathedral, with heart lifted up, and all one's being in sympathy with it, one's eye lights upon some little shop with "objets de piété" written up over it: this expression most fully renders S. Paul's words here. So the Athenians, if they could not be called pious, were at least full of actions of piety; the city was filled with objects of piety from the great statue of Pallas Athene, which could be seen from the sea, a guide to sailors, down to the shapeless stones upon which oil was poured to propitiate spirits and powers of all imaginable kinds.

No altar has been discovered to the unknown god, but Pausanias mentions altars to "gods named the unknown"[1];

[1] Pausan. *Attic.* 1. c. 1, 4, Βωμοὶ Θεῶν *ὀνομαζομένων* Ἀγνώστων.

Philostratus speaks of Athens, "where we saw altars of unknown spirits[1]," and in the *Philopatris* we read, "we found and adored the Unknown One in Athens[2];" but Lucian (to whom this is attributed) is the Swift of his day, and this may be a satire on S. Paul; the story of Epimenides[3] has already been referred to.

Here was a fine instance of the "fear of demons," an altar to the "Unknowable"—the Agnostic's God. So far S. Paul had been, as it were, complimenting them on being very religious; now he turns this into an exposure of their ignorance. 'Therefore,' says S. Paul, 'the object of your piety, though you are unacquainted with it, I am come to 'set forth' to you,—if you want to know what I am a 'setter forth' of' (*v.* 18). He now turns from the neuter "*what*," to the Personal "He." '*What* therefore you worship without character, without purpose, 'Him' I proclaim to you. God is a Person, who is caring for you, who has created all and preserves all.'

Here was an "Objet de Piété" and fine instance of δεισιδαιμονία and it was ἀγνώστος "Unknowable," the *Agnostic's* God. "There is an Unknown One, though He did not wish to be Unknown. The σπερμόλογος changes that ὅ and τοῦτο straight into Θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας οὗτος.

v. 24. "The God that made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Therefore no temple, not even one built by the order of Pericles and the work of Pheidias could contain Him. Notice that it was only to the philosophers, courtly and polished, that S. Paul could have said this, not in the Agora to "lewd fellows of the baser sort." The philosophers would acquiesce with him in this; it is a curious fact, perhaps of typical significance, that from where they were standing the Parthenon could not be seen; so that if God could be conceived of as dwelling in "temples made with hands," He could be sometimes out of sight; as to these philosophers at this moment He was out of sight.

Doesn't live in the Parthenon, hidden from that exact spot, so that if He did it would be out of sight now.

From Stephen vii. 48.

v. 25. "Neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He Himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

[1] Philostr. *Life of Apollonius*, VI. 3, οὗ καὶ Ἀγνώστων δαιμόνων βωμοὶ ἵδρυνται.

[2] Lucian, *Philopatris*, 29.

[3] See p. 412, *Story of Epimenides*, Diog. Laert. lib. I. c. 10.

"Giveth" means "He *goes on giving* to all life, and breath and all things."

v. 26. "And He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation."

"Out of one," evolution.

"Made of one[1]." We go on discovering more and more the truth of this; if the theory of Evolution is ever fully established men will preach it from this text.

Appointed crises and the limitations of men's settlements.

Distribution of races and distribution of periods.

Then S. Paul touches on what we call Ethnography, the limitations of men's settlements, the distribution of races, and their appointed crises, the distribution of periods of which we know so little; we, who can in nowise account for the way in which the races come to an end. What became of the Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman Empires? They flourished and were swept away. There are not wanting signs, in the eyes of many, of England's decay; signs that England may be drawing to the end of her appointed season. In spite of strong feeling against such things, gambling, intemperance, immorality, reckless luxury prevail to such an extent that they seem to threaten the whole Empire, even while our children are still founding new colonies. Why has He fixed these bounds and periods?

v. 27. "That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."

"Feel after Him," God, holy always, whose Voice must be listened for. And he goes on to say that they are the offspring of God; He is our Father, we are His sons and daughters; how we do not know, but it is certain that we have the power of finding God. There is no impassable line between us and Him, we are of the same nature. The hare, the dog or the bird, with all their beautiful qualities cannot be made to understand God; they can know and trust man, but further than that they cannot go.

But man can feel after Him and find Him. "I don't feel or find," someone may say. Has the seeking begun? The

[1] Not "of one *blood*." This word is not in the original.

first step must come from us; to "feel" means to grope as in the dark. As Lady Jane Grey, blindfolded for execution, stretched out her hands to find the block, saying, "What shall I do? where is it?"[1] So like the blind we must stretch out our hands to feel for that which all the while is close to us. He is not far from each one of us, but He is not to be apprehended without effort.

Write these words in your Bibles, "seek...grope...find... not far off...in Him...His offspring."

v. 28. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring."

S. Paul goes on to ask why they did not know that their own poets had recognised the truth of their sonship. Note the extraordinary accuracy in what appears to be a rough expression "certain of your poets"; Aratus the Cilician[2], and Cleanthes[3] had both said this same thing.

'What then of your great temples with all their gold and magnificence?'

A lump of matter worked up by one of the γένος cannot be analogous, homogeneous with the θεῖον of which the γένος comes.

v. 29. "Being to begin with, as we are, a *race of God*, we owe it not, to deem that the Divine is like" (that He is even *like*, far less that He *is*) "a piece of material, a graving of art, an operation of the hand and longing of man." 'These things are not the finding of Him.' S. Paul is too manly to say how beautiful they are and how clever the makers of them. 'What do you set your heart on,' he asks, 'what are all these things worth? If *you* are the offspring of God nothing can approach your own dignity.'

Why did S. Paul so work up this point with the philosophers, who knew that the Godhead was not like these works of art; they knew quite well that idols were nothing. The reason is that they were the leaders of a society which was all constructed on the idea that these images *were* like the gods; the people worshipped these blindly; and although the

Because of their responsibility for the Society of which they were leaders.

[1] *The Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary*, ed. J. G. Nichols, London, 1850, p. 59.

[2] *On Phenomena*; τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

[3] *Hymn to Jupiter*; ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν.

philosophers knew this popular belief was untrue they allowed mankind to remain in it; they did not try to lift the people out of their idolatry. Thus philosophy was barren of advance to mankind.

But religion is not a well-conceived myth for bettering mankind, but a divine introduction to the real world. The view of the East End is that the Church ought to see that the worker is not given a miserable pittance in exchange for eighteen hours' daily labour; rags in exchange for the work which produces beautiful mantles. This is part of its duty doubtless; but Religion is not a benevolent, moral, graceful scheme of improvement, but a divine introduction into the wider real world of God Eternal. It will have all these beneficent effects, but it is infinitely more.

Let me entreat you not to keep to yourselves any knowledge and power of grasp that may be given to you. Truth and reality of purpose go together.

vv. 30, 31. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

To do away the long standing contradictions, (1) God provides *one new Fact* in Nature and Humanity, viz. CHRIST JESUS. (2) And He prepares the race for a non-overlooking Judgment. "But how? we shall have died before then." "Dying will interpose no obstacle at all."

God overlooks true ignorance. This contradiction between worship and the facts of the world having existed so long and got worse and worse God overlooks all that; He will not condemn the heathen for that which they did not know. Now He gives us a new Fact in Nature and Humanity; and He prepares the race for a judgment which will not 'overlook'; for judgment by a Man, Christ Jesus.

Now for the first time the philosophers began to see what a foolish man S. Paul was.

The Athenians had their own view about Resurrection; a man once dead, all was over. 'The times of ignorance were overlooked' Paul says, 'but our responsibility is real. God has appointed a day when He will judge us, rich and poor, taking account of all advantages.' The philosophers thought

that they had caught S. Paul here. 'How can we be judged when we die?' But S. Paul answers, 'There is a man who has died; He will be your judge; He is here at Athens, not far from any one of us; He was ordained to die and rise again; death cannot free you from responsibility.'

"Have we any ground on which to believe that?"

"Yes—He has provided for that by the fact that THE MAN has anticipated our future and lived after death."

Enough, they would hear no more: these University men were gentlemen; not like the vulgar praetors of the military colony, or the mob of Jews, or the frightened Politarchs at Thessalonica; courteous and polished, they were only witty at S. Paul's expense, and none knew how to be so better than they; the epigrams of Athens were famous.

A new fact is very intolerable to *a priori* philosophers.

v. 32. "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked"; 'and some also said in effect, You have given us a very interesting and pleasant lecture, and we should be so glad if you would come and give us another little lecture some day.' *v.* 33. "Thus Paul went out from among them." They treated him indeed as the elegant Leo X. treated Luther, "Brother Martin has a fine genius."

It would not do to inquire further—Farewell Paul!

And so ἐκ μέσου.

v. 34. "But certain men clave unto him,"—and this is a strong word—"and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

κολληθέντες—a Damaris and a Dennis—worth going to Athens for.

As in Athens, so in London we have our Stoics living in pride; our Epicureans living in pleasure; have we not our Dennis and our Damaris too?

The Athenians had tried education and art, all else but religion to elevate man. We do the same now, with our Museums, and Galleries, and Bazaars, and People's Palaces, but our efforts are almost a parody of theirs whose cup of beauty and knowledge was so full that our most beautiful things are only bits and specimens and copies of theirs. These ways of raising men had been well tried, but the Church came to teach the heart of God. The Church, inward and outward, came into the world; and the Church with the Sacraments, the antient orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons is still in the same outward form even among the Kurdish mountains. Let it not be the outward form only. That He dwells in us and we in Him—this is salvation.

Our specifics for 'elevating the masses' are but fragments of real Athens.

Then came the Church of God inward and outward—what is done it does, *i.e.* you do—and the strength of its activities is your measure.

Be imitators of the progress of S. Paul, to whom even Athens yielded its Dionysius and Damaris; bring many even there to repentance in the Man Christ Jesus.

Communion of that Church *in* that "Man." If He is yours and you are His His eternal work will go on.

The Communion of that Church is in that Man; in no other way can we so realise that "we are His offspring." When it is celebrated here on Wednesday how many—Dionysius or Damaris—will come?

XXXIX.

11th February, Ash Wednesday, 1891.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xviii. 1—17. *Commercial Luxury.*

Corinth. Double sea. A world-way. Splendour and squalor. Vice established and endowed. Everything purchaseable.

Autocrats and Jews. The Jew is Victim and Master. "Policy." Jews and Christians in Rome 'impulsore Chresto.'

Sail-cloth makers on way home; halt at the great port. Their partner. '*Cilicium*' and Pontic sail-cloth.

S. Paul gives up a thankless labour—heart-broken. One word from Christ. 'I have much people in this (luxurious) city'; the reaction of such places.

II.

The new Proconsul; [Unemphatic Accuracy of detail;] his brilliant family.

His "charm"—"Dulcis Gallio"; his career and the last glimpse of him.

III.

Contrast of his refinement and S. Paul's.

How this reading points the beginning of Lent.

Is the effort after 'charm,' or after simplicity?

Am I giving up? silent through fear? indifference?

Few plain rules which are above none of us and which none of us is above.

I.

v. 1. "After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth."

The way through the Gulf of Corinth would be the cheapest

and safest route; although one of S. Paul's shipwrecks may have occurred there[1].

vv. 2—4. "And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks."

We had better go straight on here. We have fixed our eyes for some time on the royal progress of Christ from town to town; we have seen how the towns break up before Him, as He comes conquering and to conquer; we have seen in how simple a way He enters every town, and how there is no character of any town in which He has not a special interest: whether the military colony, the free town, the quiet town among the hills, or the University town. Each town's character is full of tendencies of modern life: Christ enters each, and leaves none as He found it.

Corinth. Commercial Luxury. Splendour and Squalor.

Now we come to the town whose characteristic was commercial luxury; there was no end to the wealth and splendour of Corinth, there was no end to its wickedness.

We have no such contrasts, brought together so visibly, as those under the blue sky and in the fresh air of Greece. Corinth, as you know, is on an isthmus; it possessed immense wealth, because all the commerce between the East and Italy went down the Achaean Gulf, was transported a few miles across the isthmus, and shipped to the East again. The merchants were many of them of great rank, and all natives of Corinth; the proconsul was one of the greatest magistrates of the world. The splendour of the magistrates was then displayed in open air: when the propraetor or proconsul made his journey from Rome, starting in April[2], he went with horses and chariots, with men on foot and javelin men, an immense retinue; antient writers describe how there were carried in his train the magnificent gold and silver

[1] Cf. *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, vol. I., pp. 77, 269; vol. II., p. 30, note.

[2] Cf. p. 440.

vessels of his state; and all along the Appian road the household vessels were carried in the arms of slaves. It was a display of fabulous wealth; the ostentation and show was beyond anything we find in modern life. North Africa at that time belonged to about six people.

And still in the open air, side by side with this splendour, in Corinth, were the most awful depths of misery and sin in its intensest form. The Corinthians themselves had a saying, "It is not everyone's luck to go to Corinth," and the saying had a double meaning: that it is not everyone who has the good fortune to see its splendour; and also that there were many to whom Corinth meant ruin, body and soul. Vice was established and endowed on a grand scale in Corinth. There were few heathen temples which had any influence in promoting morality; but there were temples in different parts of the world which promoted immorality, temples devoted to early sensual nature worship. At Corinth there was one of these. As the town lay between its double seas, the mountain Acrocorinthus rose above it 2,300 feet, and on the top, above all the beautiful buildings of the town, was the gorgeous temple.

Vice established, founded and endowed.

The crowding together of such contrasts in so small an area as Corinth is very unlike modern life; but the things contrasted are familiar to ourselves.

Corinth was the home of cynicism—Diogenes spent the latter part of his life in Corinth. In the place where people went to grow rich on the greatest scale, to indulge in profligacy on the greatest scale, there also was born cynical contempt of all that is beautiful in this life, and in that place was no hope of anything beyond.

Home of Cynicism.

There were two strange inhabitants here, presenting an extraordinary contrast to all around them: these were two small manufacturers, Aquila and Priscilla, natives of Pontus. I want you to notice the details of this account, because of the way in which all these smaller points are woven together. Pontus was on the southern shore of the Black Sea; Aquila and Priscilla had set up their establishment at Corinth, where they were tentmakers; they wove coarse sail-cloth of goats'

Aquila and Priscilla.

hair, which was used for sails and for tents; this was a well-known manufacture.

What brought them there?

They had been expelled from Rome.

Jews and Autocrats: Jews their shuttlecocks and masters.

We can see exactly what had been going on from what we know of the great struggle between Jews and autocrats—autocrats making a shuttlecock of the Jews, the Jews all the while their masters. Things were done on a great scale then. You know very likely that the enormous quarter of Rome called trans-Tiberine was almost entirely Jewish; and we may imagine how large the population was from the fact that one single petition, that against Archelaus, was signed in Rome alone by over eight thousand Jews, heads of families[1]. The expulsion of the Jews was on a great scale, for the Emperor, dissatisfied with their number, did not oppress them, did not make laws which made it difficult for them to live, but simply commanded them to go. They were dispersed over the whole world, they suffered much, but then as now they were in reality politically the masters.

"Good Policy."

The political power at that time played with the Jews to its own hurt. The question was whether it was good policy to expel a population which kept itself apart from other races, which was industrious and bound by its religion to pray for the peace of the country in which it lived. The greatest politicians found it good policy to use such population. Alexander the Great when he founded Alexandria, which became almost a rival of Rome, took care that a large part of the people should be Jews, whom he brought over, and established to be a nucleus of the city, although he himself was indifferent to their religion: and Julius Caesar did the same thing at Corinth, when he re-established it after it had been desolated.

Now these two Jews had left Rome and were working their way back to Pontus. They must have come down the Achaean Gulf, and crossed the isthmus of Corinth; and they had hardly done so when they were joined by a partner or

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* VIII. 11, 1.

worker of their own nation, a learned, eloquent man, a man with a mission, but determined to earn his own living for reasons which we shall presently see. He worked with them, teaching all the time what he had come to teach. They had in common not only the fact that they were Jews but that they were oppressed by Jews as being Christians—for Aquila and Priscilla came from Rome, and were already Christians. When we ask how that came to pass since we have no account of any preaching at Rome, we must remember that on the Day of Pentecost there were present "strangers of Rome"; these had carried back the news.

Paul an employé or partner determined to maintain himself, and why?

That was the situation; and the partner or employé was Paul.

All Jews of whatever rank or education were taught a craft; it was a part of the independence of the race that every person should be able to maintain himself; a wonderful institution, the acting of which we appreciate when we see how S. Paul can refuse to receive maintenance from anyone, especially from the Corinthians themselves, while he is preaching.

Pontus people, working their way home stayed at this great port to make a little money.

The hatred of the Jews is an unhappy characteristic of some Christian communities; it was unknown for the first two or three centuries of Christianity, when the Christians lived with the Jews on the terms which the Jews allowed. One of the most philosophical of the fathers impresses it on his readers that they have no right to hate the Jews because they put Christ to death; for, he says, the Jews who put Christ to death did so unknowingly. And even of the priests we are told in the Acts, that a great number became obedient to the faith. It is not for us to leave them to the judgment of God, but to pray for the time when their eyes shall be opened. As S. Paul says, "If the casting away of the Jews is the reconciling of the world,"—the occasion of the spread of Christianity to the Gentiles,—"what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead[1]?"

Early Christian view of one relation to Jews.

We could not well go on with the Acts without bearing in

[1] Ro. xi. 15.

mind the true spirit both of the Acts and of the Epistles, namely the burning desire of S. Paul that the Jews should be reconciled to Christ.

Here is another point of historical interest. A profane author (Suetonius) mentions this edict, under which the Jews were banished; and his expression is most remarkable. He says the Jews were expelled from Rome because 'they were always exciting turmoil, being urged on *by Chrestus*'[1] (impulsore Chresto).

There is no such person as Chrestus known, but Tertullian tells us that the Romans and the Greeks called our Lord 'Chrestus'; they did not understand the name 'Christus,' but the name Chrestus means 'kind' or 'useful,' and the vulgar people constantly called Him by the name they knew and understood. Suetonius means that a man called 'Chrestus' caused the turmoils, and this is true to the accusations made against the Apostles when they were brought up before magistrates: that they stirred up the people to riot by saying that there is one Christ, a King.

Notice then how the fitting together of all these details carries home the conviction that the writer is recording a thing that actually occurred; it is totally impossible that a forger should so make things to correspond. The writer says that Aquila and Priscilla were Jews from Pontus—tentmakers, S. Paul their partner. Now S. Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and one name for sailcloth is 'cilicium,' for it was so much made in Cilicia. Another chief place where sailcloth was made was Pontus; it was made in both these districts because in both there were hills which were favourable for the pasturage of flocks of goats. No attention is called to these underlying facts: it is impossible that these divers threads should meet but by the hand of truth.

They came from Rome Christians.

v. 5. "But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ."

S. Paul had left word that Silas and Timothy should

[1] Suetonius, *Claud.* xxv.; cf. Tertullian, *Apologet.* c. iii.

come to him; he had not stayed long enough at Athens for them to catch him up; so they came on from Athens.

There is a little natural outburst here.

To the synagogue on the Sabbath came throngs of Jews, with their pride of race, feeling that mankind was determined to crush them out on account of their religion. Paul feeling the noble qualities of his countrymen and their sufferings, yearned 'O that the law and the prophets were not blind books to these zealous men, men with so much secret influence, driven to and fro—O that they knew the truth of their religion; that Israel were not dead but should come back to life.' So he was 'constrained' by the word put into his mouth; he endeavoured to explain, but they opposed him and blasphemed.

But those Jews unpersuadable. Paul gave up.

Then Paul shook out his robe.

This would not happen in Rome, in the Areopagus, in the military colony. It would have made no impression on Greeks or on Romans if he had shaken out his robe; it would have been unnatural. But here was an Oriental scene, for he was among Jews.

v. 6. "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

Allusion to their Renunciation of Christ.

This reminds us of the scene when Pilate, endeavouring to deliver our Lord, took water, and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it"; and the people cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." S. Paul may have remembered these words when he said, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean."

vv. 7, 8. "And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Crispus is a translation of a Jewish name, meaning a man

Traces of common Jewish names.

with curly, crisp hair, which was a common name among Jews.

"The ruler": we hear of another ruler, Sosthenes, soon after. There were either therefore several synagogues[1] or several officials of the synagogue were called rulers, as we find in the Gospels. Thus the leading man in religious affairs was "persuaded" by a stranger; Titus Justus, probably a Jew, also received Paul and his company; some heathen Corinthians believed, Gaius and the household of Stephanas and Chloe, as we read in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians[2]. But this could not compensate S. Paul; he had come with full heart and hope to his own people, full of the prophecies of Christ, hoping that the moment had come when the blow might be struck; then Crispus believed, and some heathen Corinthians. He must have been broken-hearted; for his renunciation was so determined.

What then was Paul's position after giving them up?

When may we give people up as hopeless?

This raises what with some people is a great question—when may we give up people as hopeless?

I have known that same broken-heartedness take possession of some hearts, when apparently all that could be done by the most loving, true, instructed spirit had been done, when it had poured out, in vain, earnest appeals to intelligence and spirit, while the person appealed to has gone on, impenetrable, neither living a good life nor giving any reason for not doing so; and it has seemed impossible to know what to do.

From the fact of S. Paul's action I suppose that there is a time when we may give up trying to win; but the time will not come until we know as much as S. Paul knew about the Jews. We might indeed be obliged to desist for awhile from speaking, from appealing, for something may be gained by silence when our conviction is known to be sure.

When we know as much about them as Paul did.

[1] Or possibly Crispus ceased to be ruler on becoming a Christian. It is interesting to note that the Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens discovered in 1898 a stone at Corinth, with an inscription in Greek lettering of late Roman times, containing the letters [ΣΥΝΑ]ΓΩΓΗ ΕΒΡ[ΑΙΩΝ] (Synagogue of the Hebrews); cf. *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. for 1898, p. 234.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 11—17.

But we cannot give up until we know all S. Paul knew, until we are broken-hearted as he was.

We are coming to a period now when little by little our Lord is withdrawing from all visible, or even audible communication with His Apostles; He is accustoming them, like children, to walk alone. S. Paul must indeed have been broken-hearted if Christ found it necessary to come to him; he could not get on without a word from Christ, and he had it.

He could not get on without a word from Christ. He has it.

If any of you are in trouble or need as absolute as this, if there is anything to be effected as near to the life of your soul, I have no doubt Christ will speak a word to you also. But remember what advantage you have over S. Paul; you have the history of centuries, the lives of the Saints who have lived and died; you live surrounded by Christians; so that you have not the same need as S. Paul that Christ should speak out of darkness. S. Paul saw that all he did was making no impression: he was obliged to say, 'I see the imprecation which my people called on themselves is fulfilling itself; I must wait, and be busy about other things.' But the stress was so great that in the night in a vision, something was seen.

So shall we when we want it and would act on it as he did.

vv. 9, 10. "And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid" (even S. Paul then had been afraid) "but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city."

The Lord's shape and Voice—a quotation from Isaiah.

How this horrible place of vice and wealth became an absolute triumph! That is what comforts us in London, that wherever we have wealth and vice on a large scale striking out great roots, there also there is a great reaction. It is a commonplace to say that yearning hearts may beat under diamonds; but there is this sense in it in that when there is a great evil coming in among a cultivated people there are certain also to be great reactions; there are people yearning for something better, dissatisfied with that which seems necessary; people who want to be told how to take their lives in hand, to be told how they can live as Christians. You know that they can do so. If you yearn as much to be able to help as,

'Have much people in this city.'

Plenty of reaction in such society.

unknown to you, their spirits are yearning to better things, you may be sure you will come together.

But Christians more afraid than Agnostics are.

Are not we Christians much more afraid of saying what we believe than Agnostics are of saying what they do not believe? We feel that what we have to say is less interesting than what they say; but is it really more interesting to say, 'Everything is a blank, I do not know where I came from, what influences I am under, whether there are any spiritual influences?' than to say, 'I know God, I know Christ'? Is not the endless variety of thought, feeling, beauty, sacredness, which this implies of interest?

Am I silent through cowardice?

No, it is not because it is less interesting that we hesitate. Are we silent then through cowardice? This is the first day of Lent; let us ask ourselves, 'Am I afraid?' and 'have I a right to be afraid?'

Through indifference then?

Or is it indifference which keeps us silent? God forbid.

II.

vv. 11, 12. "And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment-seat, saying."

The new Governor.

A new magistrate, military and civil, came down to Achaia; we know from secular history when he came, for the law was strict as to the time of year when the proconsuls should leave Rome. The proconsuls were men of the greatest rank—of more importance in Rome than the Governor-General of India is in England; they were men of great resources, because such vast expenditure was required if they were adequately to represent Rome; they were not allowed to stay in Rome beyond the middle of April. At the rate they then travelled, the proconsul leaving Rome in April would reach Achaia at the time appointed in June; Gallio came in June, A.D. 53, when S. Paul had already been in Corinth for 18 months.

[Ramsay Paul arrives Sep. A.D. 51.

"The Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment-seat." How natural that

is: 'A new magistrate, he won't know about what has gone on.' The Jews had been disappointed at being unable to get up a tumult under the old proconsul; with a new one there was now a chance. Just in the same way they hurried to the new magistrate when Felix gave up his office, and Festus came in his place[1].

v. 13. "This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

The Roman law allowed national religions; but put down many private sects and worship of particular character. No religion was allowed unless it was "religio licita." Other religions were called "religiones illicitae." It was not yet settled whether Christianity was a *religio licita* or not; for the Romans did not yet know whether it was not merely a distinction in the Jewish religion like the distinction of Pharisees and Sadducees. Thus the Jews tried to make the magistrates understand that Christianity was not their religion, whereas to the Romans it usually seemed a *religio licita*[2].

So here the proconsul did not call upon Paul to speak, he stopped his accusers at once.

vv. 14—17. "But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drave them from the judgment-seat. And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things."

Thus they punished Sosthenes by lynch law, in the presence of the proconsul, to force him to take the matter up.

Gallio: brilliant family—talents devoted to the public.

We know as much of Gallio as of any but the most distinguished men of Rome. He came of a most brilliant, wealthy family; his father Annaeus Seneca was a great rhetorician, or counsel as we should say, and there were no people so distinguished among the Romans as great lawyers.

[1] Acts xxv. 1—7.

[2] Cf. p. 324.

Some of the Emperors were practically under the influence of the great lawyers of their time.

This Annaeus Seneca had three sons: the second son, Seneca, was one of the wealthiest men in Rome, and one of the best and purest of the heathen philosophers. Passages from Seneca have been printed side by side with similar passages from S. Paul's Epistles, and it is sometimes supposed that S. Paul must have read Seneca's writings, or Seneca S. Paul's[1]. The eldest son was Junius Annaeus Gallio, and the third Annaeus Mela, the father of Lucan the poet. Three of these, or possibly all four of them, were victims of Nero.

Note of accuracy.

Notice another proof of S. Luke's accuracy. Gallio was Proconsul of Achaia. The history of the government of Achaia is a singular one. It was a matter of arrangement whether tributes should be paid to the Senate or to the Emperor; if they went to the Emperor, the governor of a province was called Propraetor; if to the Senate he was Proconsul. Under Augustus Achaia had a proconsul, the next governor was a propraetor, and so were the governors through the reigns of the second and third Emperors. Under Claudius there was at first a propraetor; but he made a change and established a proconsul in A.D. 44; Nero made Achaia free, and Vespasian again made it a province.

There is no slip made in the account in the Acts; it was in about A.D. 50 that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome, and in A.D. 54 Nero succeeded Claudius; S. Paul's trial at Corinth began in A.D. 52 and had lasted for 18 months when he was brought up for trial, which happened therefore during the time when there was a proconsul. This corresponds therefore with the history of the governorships of Achaia and the fact that Gallio came in A.D. 52.

Gallio well known to us. "Dulcis."

Gallio was a person of so delightful a disposition that he was called "dulcis." He had to go to Egypt for his health for he was a delicate, consumptive man, very refined, and so impressive that his brother Seneca affectionately calls him "My Lord Gallio[2]"; and says "there was no one so dear to

[1] Cf. p. 654, note 2.

[2] Senec. *Epist.* CIV.

anyone, as the sweet Gallio to everyone[1]." He had much charm and gaiety of spirit—some of his witticisms are preserved: he was a fine gentleman and not unjust. Such is the heathen picture of him, and how exactly are both these traits shewn here; he would not call upon S. Paul to speak because he was clear that the matter did not come under his own cognisance. 'If this were a question of dishonesty I should be very glad to hear it, but really I cannot undertake to settle a question which turns on terms and words, and your own law.' "And he *drave* them from the judgment-seat." This is so characteristic, we have the very man before us.

His charm.

The Jews beat the ruler of the synagogue in the hope that Gallio would then interfere; but no, if he did not think fit to interfere before, he was not bound to now. Beating Sosthenes was very brutal, but it made no difference to the matter.

This man with all his charm won everyone; and what became of him?

He went to Rome, and became the favourite of the Emperor, who was one of the wickedest creatures that ever breathed. The popular man gave in, and became an abettor of Nero's vices. Nero put his brother to death. The last glimpse we have of Gallio, except the mention of his death[2], is given us by Tacitus, who says:

The last glimpse of him "fratris morte pavidum et pro sua incolumitate supplicem." And the last of Sosthenes is 1 Cor. i. 1.

"Frightened at his brother's death he was a suppliant for his own safety[3]."

Are we not in danger of having many Gallios? Do we not lay infinitely too much stress on charm? Do we make education, and our way of dealing with children from their youth, go down deep into character, requiring obedience, truth? Do we make the young children obedient, truthful, fearing God? The Roman life did not teach them the fear of God, but the contempt of everything that is called God; it did not teach them obedience to anything except an external law; but if disobedience was committed against the Roman

Are we not rearing men of that kind? with absolutely no depth.

[1] Senec. *Quaest. Nat.* IV. praef.

[2] Dio Cassius records that he was put to death by Nero, lx. 35, lxii. 25.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* XV. 73.

law of society, a man had to disappear. The laws of society always lay great stress on anything that constitutes charm; the faculty of organisation, or such facility in social arrangements as makes things easily fall into order; a happy decisiveness; the ready geniality that makes everyone welcome; the wonderful fascination which is exercised by anyone who seems to be more interested in you than in anything else; and if there is added to such qualities the dignity given by a sense of influence, we get the principal ingredients of charm; and if this is united with the attractive appearance and manner, and the temper which will not lend itself to disparaging sayings, we get a Gallio; and there is many a woman Gallio too.

Is it not common with women?

And what is the end of it? The life while it lasts is pleasant, there is a sense of popularity well-deserved; but at the end, when the character is not sincere, when the person had set out to gain popularity and was not careful meanwhile of deeper things—at the end you find a man frightened at his brother's death, and supplicating the horrid creature whom he despised for his own safety.

No power has any strength, but in truth, obedience, and the fear of God.

III.

Contrast Paul. Self-maintenance on a principle more refined than Gallio's; the finer gentleman.

And here we see the contrast with a man really fine, for that character we have described is not in reality a fine character; and what a contrast it is to the simple man who came to do all men good by the knowledge of God, yet would allow no one to contribute to support him, while he could earn his simple living. Look at his letter to Philemon, the letter of a most perfect gentleman, about the slave who had escaped, whom he had converted to Christianity, so that the man is ready to die for him, and is only longing to stay with him. Paul sends him back to his master with a letter, 'I love the slave, he is almost necessary to me, yet I would not keep him even until I get a letter from you. If he stole any

money put that to my account. I will make up any fraud the slave may have practised.' There is the true man.

This is the first day of Lent, and there are forty days. This is not a congregation in which it is necessary to say much about Lent, but take this as a subject for self-examination: "whether you have the true secret of true charm, or whether there has been any acting to obtain what you possess?" The same power can be exerted to much greater ends, if it comes from a root deep within. Therefore give up the thought of being this or that in the sight of others; do not seem, but be. Unless you try to be without seeming you can be nothing before God or man, but a perfectly sweet Gallio, before whom one day the fear of death will come.

Lent asks you (1) the secret of Charm;

Lent bids us seek our God; to make day by day more intercession for our friends, for the world, for the ruling of our Church and country. It bids us practise discipline; and the old discipline in food is simple, and more difficult than people know until they try; we all feel sure we could practise it; then let us begin, at any rate with respect to delicacies; it is wrong to hurt health; but at any rate we can try discipline. There are a few plain rules which are not above any of us, and which none need think they are above observing, learning by, gaining by. Lent bids you know yourselves; it bids you let the effort be not for "charm," but for inward simplicity.

asks you (2) to seek God; (3) to intercede; (4) to discipline self in food—at least delicacies;

(5) to know self; (6) to let the effort be not for "charm" but inward simplicity.

We parted in June, we meet in February. Parting in June we did not know what would happen to any of us; strange things from God have come to many of us[1]; but whether they are joy, or sorrow, they leave one lesson; that we must open our eyes and see what is within, that acting is misery; that there is no joy nor peace nor strength but in sincerity.

[1] The year had brought much sorrow to the Archbishop himself—his eldest daughter had died in the end of Oct. 1890; his brother in the following month; the death of Dean Church in Dec. 1890, of Archbishop Thomson at Christmas; the ill-health and resignation of his friend Bishop Wilkinson; and the appointment of Dean Davidson to the Bishopric of Rochester, had wrought many changes in the Church; and in the autumn of 1890 the judgment on the Lincoln case, which had occupied him for so long, was delivered.

XL.

18th February, 1891.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xviii. 18—28.

Corinth by Ephesus to Jerusalem for a Vow; its nature. Special Devotions.

What else at Jerusalem and at Antioch (Gal. ii.); and after, *v.* 23.

[*Postpone* Attitude of St Paul towards Jewish Ritual.

Note, Idolatrous Ephesus more receptive of high thought and feeling than sensual Corinth; cf. 1 Cor. iii. 2, Acts xx. 27, Eph. iii. 4.]

24—28. Apollos. The Disciple of John Baptist: of Alexandria: The Commendatory Letter to Corinth and what came of it, 2 Cor. iii. 1; 1 Cor. iii.

(1) What he knew as a 'Johannean'—(Matt. iii.) Judgment to come; Repentance, Baptism as an outward sign of it; True 'Children of Abraham' (Justification by Faith); (John i.) The Lamb of God; Atonement; Descent of Holy Spirit on Christ; (Acts xviii. 25) The Life of Christ answering to the Prophecies—"accurately the things concerning Jesus."

(2) What he did not know; viz. The 'Way of God more accurately'; Baptism in its inward spiritual grace; The Holy Spirit given to all believers (xix. 2); union with Christ through His Gifts.

Many 'Christians' are 'Johanneans' still: they cannot receive the Inner Gospel.

Why Doctrines 'matter.' Doctrines (= Learning, Teaching) are facts from a larger world to help us in a narrow and deceitful world.

Acts xviii. *v.* 18. "And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchreae; for he had a vow."

By Ephesus from Corinth to Jerusalem and Antioch.

To fulfil a vow.

S. Paul, going from Corinth to Jerusalem was taking a route by Ephesus; he intended to return to Antioch, the centre of Gentile Christianity. His object in this journey was to fulfil a vow; and we may well suppose that this vow was made in gratitude for his singular deliverance at Corinth, a deliverance which depended wholly on the singular character of Gallio. He had shorn his head in Cenchreae (for such was the nature of the vow of the Nazarite which he took) and his hair would be burnt in the flame of the sacrifice at Jerusalem. Notice this example of consecration to special devotions for a period; a sacrifice of time, and of self for special spiritual cultivation. May not we, too, well set apart some special time as a mark of thankfulness, and for the consideration of our life of surrender to God?

Nature of the vow.

Consecration to special devotions for a period.

vv. 19—21. "And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus."

At Ephesus then he left his companions, and having saluted the Church went down to Antioch and on to Jerusalem. You find S. Paul's own account of what else passed at Antioch in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians[1]. How Peter, hard pressed by the Jews, had betrayed the cause of the Gentiles. He was convinced that his action was a desertion, and never afterwards went back from his conviction of the equality of Jews and Gentiles.

[1] Gal. ii. 11, but cf. *S. Paul the Traveller*, p. 157 ff., and *The Epistle to the Galatians*, by J. B. Lightfoot, p. 114, where other views are put forward.

v. 22. "And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the Church, and went down to Antioch."

There are two great subjects which we must touch upon in this connection with which we cannot fully deal here. The first is S. Paul's attitude to Jewish Ritual; the second is the contrast between Corinth and Ephesus[1]. Corinth is antagonistic to S. Paul, slow to learn Christian doctrine; and the idolatrous Ephesus is more susceptible of high thought than sensual Corinth. To the Ephesians S. Paul gives the highest doctrine, the deepest teaching; the Epistle to the Ephesians is the Epistle of Epistles[2]. The idolatrous can be lifted to the most perfect doctrine, while the awful power of sensuality causes the failure of the perceptive powers of mind.

vv. 23—28. "And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing all the disciples. Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully. And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much which had believed through grace: for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

Apollos.

Notice how clearly the character of Apollos is brought out: a man "powerful in the Scriptures," "eloquent," logical.

He had been brought up at Alexandria, where there was

[1] Acts xx. 27, Eph. iii. 4, cf. 1 Cor. iii. 2.

[2] That the Epistle was an encyclical does not however annul the fact that Ephesus was one of the Churches to which it was addressed.

a great University, and where Philo, the greatest of Jewish thinkers, lived and taught; this was a place likely to aid a man like Apollos to acquire the greatest intellectual grasp.

But what about the matter of Apollos's teaching? He had a perfect knowledge of the Old Testament, and had even become a Christian. Yet Priscilla and Aquila took him and expounded to him more accurately the way of God. Notice that Priscilla herself is one of his teachers and the first named.

(1) What he knew.

What was it that he knew before? He knew what John had taught (Matt. iii.) of a Judgment to come, of Christ the Judge, of the Eternal separation between good and evil: he knew what was meant by the true children of Abraham, or Justification by faith: he had received Baptism by water, as an outward sign of repentance.

And again, if you refer to the 1st chapter of S. John's Gospel you will see that he had heard of the Lamb of God, of the Atonement that Christ should make, of the Descent of the Holy Ghost on Jesus; he knew that the life of Jesus answered to the prophecies. Yet he had to learn more accurately the things concerning Jesus. What was it then that he did not know?

(2) What he knew not.

Among Christians are many "Johanneans" still who cannot receive the Inner Gospel.

There are many still who are merely followers of Apollos, but it is no less necessary for them than for Apollos to know more. Apollos did not know Baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus, he did not know Baptism as more than an outward sign; he did not know its inward grace, which is Christ. There are no vain or empty ceremonies in our Church, there is a meaning in the Sign of the Cross in Baptism. Apollos did not know that the Holy Ghost was given to all believers[1]. How does this Gift affect us now in our lives? Apollos had not heard that the Holy Ghost will descend on every heart that opens itself to Him and will dwell there. Do we know the Spirit of Truth and living Grace which he did not know? Is not this the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to us?

Apollos did not know the Union with Christ in His gifts; it is a union which grows and expands as our spirit grows,

[1] Cf. xix. 2.

a union which gives a meaning to our services and our sacrifices; it is a union indeed when we come to His Blessed Sacraments.

What do Doctrines matter?

It is a way of the time to ask what doctrines matter, what difference they make. Doctrines mean no more than learning or teaching; a doctrine is only another name for a fact, looked at differently. Any fact discovered, like the fact of gravitation or evolution, is a doctrine; so is the doctrine of Redemption a fact. And the Christian doctrines are facts of a larger world communicated to us by God. Men narrow their horizon, fixing their minds on houses, lands, wealth; and make a deceitful world of it. How small this world is in comparison with the Universe.

Doctrines are simply facts communicated from a larger world to us.

The doctrines of Christ's gifts, His union with us are facts, teachings about the ways He has provided to bring us nearer to Himself.

Hence it is that "he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he," for the "least in the Kingdom of Heaven" belongs to a higher world if he knows the "powers" of it.

Any and every doctrine ought to make a difference to life; it does if we realize it.

"The Communion of Saints." What a difference this makes if we lose one saint whom we love. Or if there has been a blot on our lives, which haunts our conscience, if we are going to die, what a difference it makes to know the doctrine of the "Forgiveness of Sins."

XLI.

February 26th, 1891.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xix. 1—10. Return to work at Ephesus.

Sidelights. Maintenance of self and others, 1 Cor. iv. 11, Acts xx. 34; 'Ephesian tents'; Synagogue and House, xix. 8, xx. 20; Public attacks, xix. 9; First Convert, Ro. xvi. 5; 'School' of Tyrannus. Presbyters, 'Bishops,' xx. 17, 28; extension through 'Asia,' xix. 10, 1 Cor. xvi. 19, Col. ii. 1; Dangers, xx. 18, 19, 1 Cor. xv. 31.

Apollos gone—but S. Paul finds Twelve more: some lack perceptible.

'Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?'
'Nay, but we did not hear even if a Holy Ghost *is*.'

(1) Now they believed Jesus was Christ; 'felt themselves' Christians. Is not that enough?

(2) Might have become devout believers in the Holy Ghost (as many now) without being baptized:

(3) Or like Cornelius have been recipients of the Holy Ghost (as some now) without being baptized:

(4) But the question is 'what was perfect, Christian, spiritual?'

Answer to that is 'Will any man forbid *the* water?' or 'will anyone refuse the water?' Plainly, not on account of 'spirituality,' xi. 17.

There was and is Order in Things Divine: it is carried out, xix. 5. Cf. Samaria, viii. 12, 17.

'The Doctrine of Baptisms and of Laying on of Hands.' Its Meaning. It is part of the 'Foundation.' Heb. vi. 1. [The 'Churches.']

Belief implies Obedience if anything: like Christ's own. His Master-plan for formation of a People 'zealous of good works,' how lightly trifled with.

The Tongues, temporary. 'Righteousness and Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghost' perpetual.

We come now to a difficult subject, and I ask your prayers, that I may speak on it moderately and usefully, trying not so much to give expression to the true doctrine, as not to give occasion that the true doctrine should be misunderstood.

We live in a spiritual, and in a material world. We ourselves are spiritual, and we have material instruments for living in this world which become known to us through senses. But no one who uses his senses with reflection can avoid seeing what antient heathen philosophers, as well as many Christians, have said, that under the material world lies something spiritual.

We do not know, and cannot imagine an immaterial existence. If you try to imagine the condition of the spirits of those who have gone hence, you find yourselves clothing them with shape and form derived from what you see. You find you are clothing your thought of the invisible with something derived from the visible, material, tangible.

Whether then, living thus, we see the invisible, and are able to endure because we do see it; or whether failing to see, we sink gradually back to living in the senses which perish with the using; in all the world which God appoints for us there are appeals to both our natures, our material, and our spiritual nature; there are appeals to the spirit; but since it is God's will that all should be saved, and there are many who cannot be approached but through things external, there are appeals through the material nature also.

We know to our cost that we are not able to shake ourselves clear of material things as we would; many struggle through life, and find at last their comfort in David's words—that "the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit"; after all they

cannot execute the great things they hoped for, but what God will accept and work with is the broken heart, the spirit that knows itself enfeebled, and He will do great things with it. 'A heart broken, broken into the smallest fragments (or *contrite*) O God, thou wilt not despise.' Those who have had many opportunities and who have tried to use them, find comfort in nothing but this: 'the broken heart, thou, O God, who didst make it, wilt not despise.'

And God tells us that this breaking is not in vain: "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness."

God finds a way of repairing the fragments, making the heart sound and strong, so that what we may do, feel, think, goes up as an effective service, a sacrifice of righteousness. I have spoken of this now because the part we are coming to in the Acts leads us to wonder of how much importance external things are to religion.

Individuals and Churches are liable to fall into great mistakes. Some individuals and Churches which are strong and self-asserting turn so much to the external side, that they glorify rites and ceremonies, they feel that we are in a material world, and must use material things. But there is a great danger that the things of the Spirit should thus be forgotten; and history tells us how awful that danger is.

Then there are those who, starting away from externalism, fling themselves into spiritualities; and we know that there are no such wild excesses, no such wild fanaticism, as among those who have begun by crying (as Luther says) "Spirit, Spirit," and destroying all roads and bridges by which the Spirit can travel into the human heart.

Then the one class reproaches the other with externalism; and those who lean on externalism reproach others with false spirituality.

This is going on among us now; both parties are God's children; neither is quite balanced in judgment. The secret of sects and parties is that, leaning on their own judgment, they reproach one another: this is not more true of one party than of the other. It behoves us then to be very careful to

give due weight to both sides, not to give a push towards either way of thinking to those under our own direction.

When you look round this beautiful external world, and understand what care God has bestowed on material objects, even if they are to last but an hour, or a minute, see to it that the spirit does not undervalue God's work.

This is the principle which was at work in the crisis to which things were now coming, as we see in the Acts.

The Johanneans, we saw, knew much about the Christian religion; they knew the judgment to come; the eternal separation; Jesus, the Lamb of God; the approach to God by atonement; repentance and the baptism of repentance; baptism that is without grace, only as a sign of repentance; they knew of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, Jesus as fulfilling the prophecies: Apollos taught all this. But the Roman lady Priscilla, and the Jew Aquila, took the vigorous disputant and shewed him something that he knew not. Though he had worked so well in his way, there was something beyond what he knew. He returned to Corinth to take up again those whom he had taught, to complete them, as he himself had been completed. He taught with so great power that his name is one among the three teachers mentioned in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, Peter, Paul, and Apollos. S. Paul at the beginning of the Epistle says that the Corinthians are so low-minded that they are unable to see the good in other parties than their own; that they took great names and made them, sorely against the will of the people themselves, the names of parties, crying, "I am of Paul, and I of Cephas, and I of Apollos." S. Paul takes this as the surest indication that the Corinthians are not, in worship, feeling after the mind of God.

Apollos then is gone: S. Paul has been at Ephesus, having gone to Jerusalem to complete his vow, and come back into Asia Minor, and while Apollos is teaching at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country—or "coasts," as it is in the old English, meaning "parts" or "districts"—came to Ephesus.

v. 1. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at

Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus."

You know the magnificence of Ephesus[1], and what discoveries have been made in the excavations there.

Round and return to work at Ephesus.

On his last visit to Ephesus, S. Paul had told the Church that he would return (xviii. 21); his word for "return," *ἀνακάμψω*, is a pretty, descriptive word, used in connection with the chariot-races: the "stadium" was a long course, with a division called the "spina" down the middle; at the end of the spina the chariots turned to come back and the word *ἀνακάμπτειν* is used of this turning. S. Paul had doubtless caught the word at Corinth which was famous for chariot-races. "To turn round the goal and come back" was exactly what S. Paul had done.

Sidelights. Maintenance of self and others.

Now let us consider the sidelights on this passage: S. Paul went on working at the same cloth-making for his living in Ephesus (1 Cor. iv. 11, 12); and on a later visit when he touched at the port of Ephesus, and sent for the elders to come down and meet him, he said, "Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to *them that were with me*" (Acts xx. 34). Here is a light on what sort of a workman he was, on the energy, the spirit, the completeness of his work.

We get another light from profane history; in a description of the luxury of Alcibiades it is said that he surrounded himself with everything that was best, and would not travel unless he had an Ephesian tent. Ephesus then was one principal centre of the tentmaking, and this shews why Aquila and Priscilla went there, working their way back to Pontus.

Look on now a few verses ahead:

vv. 8—10. "And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years;

[1] Cf. pp. 481 ff.

so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."

"The Way" is a technical term, the name by which Christianity was known.

Synagogue and House.

"The school of Tyrannus," or "lecture-room." Either Tyrannus was some famous teacher of eloquence, and the 'school' was attached to his house, or was a large room in which he taught; or possibly he had been a teacher, who had given his name to a school of eloquence. S. Paul hired this place and lectured there after he had been turned out of the synagogue; public attacks were made upon him before the population of the city, by heathen as well as by Jews.

Public attacks.

First Convert.

In the Epistle to the Romans we have the name of his first convert at Ephesus, for he sends his salutation to a Christian at Rome: "Salute Epaenetus my beloved, who is the first-fruits of Asia[1] unto Christ" (Ro. xvi. 5).

The "firstfruits of Asia" must have been from Ephesus, the capital of Asia.

If you refer to Acts xx. 17 you will see that on the later journey S. Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called for the *elders* or *presbyters of the Church.* So S. Paul during this short stay must have appointed presbyters. During the life-time of the Apostles these elders were called indifferently "presbyters" and "bishops," for the Apostles themselves had the oversight of the Church; in this same chapter of the Acts (xx. 28) S. Paul addresses them as "bishops." So the Church in its first growth had a body of persons appointed to conduct and manage the congregations, administer the funds etc., and these were called overseers, ἐπίσκοποι, or elders, πρεσβύτεροι.

Presbyters, Bishops.

But about the time of S. Paul's death or probably just before, the "overseers" began to be called "bishops" exclusively. In the Revelation they are called "angels." Notice that in one of the seven messages addressed to "the angels" of the Churches there is a word of severe warning to the "angel of Ephesus," which falls in with a word of

[1] *Asia*, the province on the sea-shore, not *Achaia* as in the Old Version; cf. p. 373.

warning that S. Paul gives to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus[1] (cf. Acts xx. 28 ff., Rev. ii. 4). We know how short a time after this S. John wrote the Apocalypse, and if we ask how in so short a time seven Churches so important could be founded in Asia, we shall find that the process was probably going on at this time. Compare for instance *v.* 10, "All they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks"; and Demetrius' speech afterwards (*v.* 26), "Ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade should come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." Extension through Asia.

"Almost throughout all Asia" the teaching spread, for though Paul did not travel about Asia himself, he gave so divine an impulse that he persuaded men in their own houses to give up their idolatries and become true Christians. We see from Col. ii. 1[2] how widely his influence spread. We must pray that God would fill our missionaries with such a spirit as this.

Notice the great dangers under which S. Paul's work was done here. He says (xx. 18, 19), "Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews"; and (1 Cor. xv. 31, 32), "I die daily. If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Nothing but the thought of the resurrection of the dead would have enabled him to go through what he had met at Ephesus[3]. Dangers.

We must turn from great things to small; like the local

[1] Cf. Address, XLIV. pp. 506 ff., 518 ff.

[2] The letter to the Colossians was also to be sent on to Laodicea; Col. iv. 16—18.

[3] See p. 490.

touch of ἀνακάμψω, "I will turn back," is the word ἐθηριομάχησα, "I fought with beasts." Besides the theatre at Ephesus there was a great public building, a place where those condemned to death had to fight with wild beasts.

Put all these things together: you see a man speaking in a glorious city under a great proconsul, a man who changed the face of the world; he is maintaining himself and his companions; he stays in the synagogue as long as he can for the sake of his own countrymen, and when he is turned out hires a lecture-room, to try to convince the heathen; then he is attacked with such ferocity that it was like fighting with wild beasts; he teaches with such intensity that conversions take place throughout the great cities of Asia, without his having himself set foot outside Ephesus.

What is the substratum of this? Christ's leaven, working in three measures of meal.

We must go back again to the beginning of the chapter. When S. Paul came to Ephesus (*vv.* 1, 2) "he found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?"

Apollos gone but Paul finds Twelve more.

These men were Christians, they were called so, they believed in Christ. Is not this a remarkable question to put to them and does it not shew that they, some twelve persons, were in the same position as Apollos? They knew all that Apollos knew, but just those things on which S. Paul laid stress, as the essence of Christianity, were beyond them. S. Paul in converse with them saw some deficiency, some lack of power, which made him put this question. Converse with them made him see something in their Christianity which he did not understand until he put his finger on it by saying, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?"

Some tone, or some lack in their personal piety perceptible to him.

Imagine yourself coming across people like these who through some incapacity of faith did not know the things beyond; and that you had, in as short a time, to teach them the thing most determined and most necessary in your sight: does it not make you feel that 'S. Paul perhaps would have asked me also whether the Holy Ghost was given me'?

v. 2. "And they said unto him: Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost *is*[1]."

You see the enormous difference in S. Paul's view between the people who have received the Holy Ghost, and those who have not. These men knew from the Old Testament that there was a Spirit of God, but not, that in the Church of Christ the Holy Ghost *was* in such a manner that every believer might receive Him.

At this moment S. Paul does not know their history, and says with surprise (*v.* 3), "Into what then were ye baptized?" 'Were you not baptized into the name of the Trinity, did you not receive the Holy Ghost; or if you know Him not, unto what then were you baptized?'

Their answer makes it clear: "Unto John's baptism," that is the only baptism they knew anything about; they supposed it was all right.

v. 4. "And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance"; he was a great preacher of repentance, for he taught that "the axe is laid unto the root of the tree." People were baptized unto John's baptism, and his disciples travelled through the world baptizing those who repented and confessed their sins, teaching that baptism was a gracious sign that God would forgive them if they put their sins away, but that it added nothing to them.

v. 4. "Saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus."

So these men believed on Him whom John said should come after him.

v. 5. "And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."

The fact that these men *felt* themselves to be Christians would be accepted by many now as a sufficient proof that they *were*; but S. Paul says this is not sufficient; they are not Christians because they know about Christ, because they feel themselves to be Christians; they have to examine themselves if they be in the faith, and believe what Christ taught through His Apostles. Yet this test of *feeling* that they

(1) Now they believed in Jesus as Christ; felt themselves Christians. That would be sufficient now for many.

[1] A literal translation.

were Christians would be sufficient for many people now, and that fact marks the standpoint of the present day.

(2) They might have become devout believers in the Holy Ghost without being baptized.

Further, like the younger people among the Baptists now, these men might have come to be devout believers in the Holy Ghost without being baptized; or as in the case of Cornelius it might even have pleased God to give them the gift of the Spirit without baptism.

(3) Or like Cornelius *et sui* have been even recipients of the Holy Ghost without being baptized.

Am I not within the truth if I say that hundreds of thousands of Church people would say it was sufficient to believe in God in the fullest sense, and that those who did so received the Holy Ghost; that it would be presumption to apply the external rite when God had given the Spirit, and His presence was visible among the people; that some who have never been baptized are among the most devout, and most truly Christian; that this is the work of the Spirit, and that is enough. I can testify that the Quakers I know are so sweet, so gentle, so devout, so utterly self-sacrificing, so perfect in their ways, that it is impossible not to believe that they have the seed of this in them; it is visible to all men that the Holy Ghost dwells in them. Are they right to stop there? Some would say, "What man shall presume to give them also the external ordinance?"

As some plainly are now.

(4) But the Question is "What was right to do?" The answer to that is "Will any man forbid *the* water?" and "will any man refuse the water?"

If this view is right, S. Peter was absolutely and entirely wrong; he asked not "who shall *presume* to baptize them?" but "can any man *forbid* the water?" If he had had to speak to Cornelius himself, would he not have said, 'Can any man *refuse* to be baptized[1]?' And if this view is right, S. Paul would be wrong, because when these men who believed heard what he had to teach they were baptized: and S. Paul went further; he not only baptized, but confirmed them.

vv. 6, 7. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men."

Two ordinances. And do we ask what right he had to impose them? 'Could any man refuse them?' We see from the teaching of S. Peter and S. Paul that if any man *did* refuse, it would be because he had not the true view of

[1] Cf. p. 280.

spirituality; for we cannot say that S. Peter and S. Paul were unspiritual in their views. Not on account of spirituality.

Now we come to the point where the principle comes in that we are Composite Beings, living in a world of visible things, of social relations, of constant intercourse; yet conscious of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost dwells in us; we have a growing consciousness of that, as we advance more and more into the Holy of Holies. But there are no other spiritual phenomena of which we are certain in the same way as we are of external phenomena; they are with us, we know there is something, which we translate into belief; as we believe that the angels are ministering spirits; but we are not conscious of them as we are of objective material phenomena. We are living in two worlds, and we have a commandment; the perfect will of God is that we should sanctify this outer world, that it should be sanctified in a way that corresponds to the sanctification of the spirit within. For the material existence is the outcome, the final production of the spirit world, as the flower and fruit of a tree come from the inner force, the sap; and we ought to sanctify the outward things which come in contact with us, and to sanctify ourselves outwardly for their sakes, as well as to be sanctified in the spirit, which is in contact with God.

Here we stand on a sharp edge, from which it is so easy to fall on either side.

We may lay too great stress on outer things; or avert ourselves from them as if we had already passed through death. Those who do one become too external, those who do the other too fanatical.

The beauty and wisdom of the Church is that from the earliest time it has taught children beautiful ordinances accompanied by full explanation; its happiness and peace is in this, that being in two worlds it walks in two worlds. There was and is an Order in Things Divine.

I will not say anything invidious of other Churches, but we must each know Churches, bodies, individuals, who lay exceeding stress on one or other extreme; and I don't know if it is not a still greater fault that they are so keen to throw reproaches at one another. Instead of being

stung by the spiritual world to appreciate external beauty and to draw it into a higher world, they turn from it; or they rest on the external side, instead of supplying the spirit with what it wants; to supply all the needs which "my God is able to supply" we ought to be complete on both sides.

To sum up; what temperate view we ought to have ourselves, what gentle speech in answer to the earnestness of others! We should pray as helping, not as condemning. What can we take in this matter for our guidance rather than our dearest Lord's words? He spoke only once about this matter. The Lamb of God pure and perfect, as John the Baptist knew, a sinless and stainless being, offered as a perfect atonement, came to be baptized; with what uninstructed amazement he who baptized the defiled crowds saw this Jesus come also. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

Belief involves Obedience if anything; Christ's own.

Christ answered, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Whatever righteousness and sanctification there was in the world, let it be fulfilled; the Most Holy was not above receiving the baptism of repentance at the hands of His servant. The same principle underlies the wonderful account of Apollos, and of these men, who were carrying out what they knew, and living like the Apostles themselves, true to God and Christ; they might have received the Holy Ghost without baptism, but "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," therefore Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

The "Tongues" temporary. "Righteousness and Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghost" Eternal.

You will not fall into the foolish mistake of thinking this speaking with tongues is the gift of the Holy Spirit[1]. This gift of tongues is an external sign, a temporary sign which would pass away; but what we have, and those men had, as the gift of the Holy Ghost, a gift worth praying for, struggling for, subduing ourselves for, is the gift of Righteousness and Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghost.

[1] Cf. p. 154 ff.

XLII.

March 4th, 1891.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xix. 11—22. *Commercial Religion.*

Ephesus.

Not 'every-day powers' (11). His workaday 'Handkerchiefs and Aprons:'—Why so strangely materialistic a way of working?

The Reign of Magic—'Ephesine grammata' and Jewish sorcery.

'Jesus I recognise, and Paul I know.'

19. The 'Meddling' arts. Playing with Holy Names. The Professors' defeat—The holocaust.

20. Sound growth and complete work (21) and impending storm.

21. 'I must *see* Rome.'

22. [Distressing news from Corinth.] Mission of Timotheus and Erastus.

A Literal Lesson on "Meddling" (19).

Spiritual Lessons.

Turning out Demons for wrong reasons: for profit: 'for sake of example.'

Playing with Holy Words—'Fear' becomes a wholesome experience which must precede Love.

Surrender to be made of false influences.

S. Paul is still working at Ephesus, earning not only his own support, but that of others; at the same time teaching the things kept secret from ages and generations, but now revealed by the Holy Spirit.

The 'handkerchiefs and aprons' of the Missionary artisan.

vv. 11, 12. "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out."

Surely that is a very startling record; and it raises the questions, 'How could God have worked in that way?' 'Does not this give an opening to superstition?' 'How could God have suffered so materialistic a way of working that things in contact with the body of the saint were imbued with power to heal body and soul?' 'If there is anything in the Acts added by after ages, would it not be such a passage as this?' 'Even if the passage is found in the earliest manuscripts, does it not contradict all that we know and think about spiritual religion?'

Why so strangely materialistic a method of working?

There are two things to remember; that God talks to people in their own language, so that they can understand Him; and that we shall not have the least idea what language it was necessary to talk, or how they could understand Him, if we take isolated passages and judge them only by our own conceptions. Looked at in this way we should say this was a great contradiction to God's methods of working.

If we look at the passage in the original it is no simpler; the literal rendering of the Greek words translated "special miracle" is, "not every-day powers," not the things that are by way of taking place. "*God* wrought special miracles *by the hands of Paul*." This is a very carefully written passage; it is specially mentioned that "*God* wrought" them; and specially "*by the hands* of Paul," not 'through the spiritual influence surrounding Paul,' but 'by his hands.'

'Handkerchiefs and aprons were carried away from his body'; "handkerchiefs" means the same as with us, or rather what was used for wiping off the perspiration, and "aprons" were wrappings, half-girt, fastened round the body.

You have perhaps watched people approach a Roman Catholic shrine in some out-of-the-way place, and press a delicate handkerchief against a tomb, and carry it away with them. This was not what was done here, but the simple aprons which Paul wore as a workman and the handkerchiefs

he had about him were carried to the sick. God wrought "no every-day powers" by the most commonplace and vulgarest articles possible. Keep in view that it is a materialistic description and intended to be so.

There is no doubt as to the authenticity of this passage.

But is it possible to read the next passage and not see the force of this, and why the method of working was material?

v. 13. "But certain also of the strolling[1] Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them which had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

The Reign of Magic, its students and professors.

Exorcism was a profession among the Jews; far be it from us to assert that exorcism had not a spiritual basis, or that there was not the work of an evil spirit among those who were called "possessed." But Christ has power over the spirits in the kingdom of Satan; the knowledge of the Cross and of the Holy Spirit is widespread now, guiding from morning to night those whose intention it is—and they are many—to follow the Voice of God; and it would be strange if all this did not drive out Satan; his power over Christian regions is nothing like his power elsewhere, and, since Christianity began, he is withheld; he cannot now do all he could do then; as Christ wins His adversary fails. We must not underrate his strength, but all records of antient times, and of the condition of some distant countries at present, shew the reality of the spiritual power which is checked; even when it was more powerful holy men, moved by the Spirit of God, were able to put the evil power to flight. We hear of sights and sounds witnessed by Christian writers, which seem like what we call insanity, and these have been cured by prayer and by the word of God. Of course there was much imposture, for the very reality of such facts was sure to produce a tenfold crop of imposture; and along with those, few and far between, who believed themselves commissioned to work with God in casting out evil there were

Implies some reality of spiritual power bridled now by the Christian spirit.

[1] "Strolling" is too common a word; the Greek term means that they travelled from place to place.

many impostors, who made much for themselves out of the credulity of the multitude.

Here we have a group of such men, seven sons of a Jew; they relied perhaps partly on that superstition which attributes special powers to *seven* sons. Here we are face to face with the reign of magic—which had such power then over mankind: magic, witchcraft, sorcery, were then not driven into holes and corners, practised by poor people in ignorant credulity; but there were great books on magic written by philosophers, who believed that they were on the verge of finding out the link with the spirit world, and that by incantations they could control it. We have pages upon pages of such extracts from the works of great men. Magic reigned supreme. We read of scarcely one person of social eminence without coming across some magician who had great power over him.

Ephesine grammata.

Ephesus was the headquarters of magic. You know the influence of the temple of Artemis or Diana, to which pilgrims came from the whole world; of its treasures, the greatest perhaps in existence. And in Ephesus there was also a school of people practising magic; the charms accounted most powerful were those of the "Ephesine grammata." We know what some of these were; one of the incantations is preserved, and we have one long string of the powers the magicians began by invoking—Darkness, Light, the Earth, the four seasons, the Conqueror, and Fixed Fate. These words were not written in common Greek, but in old words, come down from the aborigines, and they had thus a strange magical sound.

Jewish Sorceries.

The Jewish "exorcists" also had their headquarters at Ephesus; from "exorcist" "sorcery" is probably derived, as from "grammata" comes the mediaeval word "grammerie."

'Took upon them to name...Jesus whom Paul preacheth,' they themselves being unbelievers, both in Jesus and in Paul. There was a great audacity in using the sacred Name, and the name of the living man who was preaching this Name, and professing it as the destruction of the kingdom of magic.

vv. 14, 15. "And there were seven sons of one Sceva

a Jew, a chief priest, which did this. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

Our revisers had not the courage to change the words which are so familiar; but in the original the word used concerning our Lord is "I perceive"; that concerning S. Paul is a word implying "thoroughly understanding"; so it runs: "Jesus I *perceive*, and Paul I thoroughly understand; but you, what are you?" Shewing an awful sense of the enormous difference between even S. Paul and Jesus. 'Paul I know well, understand what he is doing, am aware of his movements'; but of Jesus the spirit does not dare to say this: "Jesus I perceive," as if the evil spirit was in some far region of hostility to God, into which penetrated a ray of the knowledge of the Son of God.

"Jesus I *perceive*, Paul I know;" rather awful recognition of a great difference.

v. 16. "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

"And the man in whom." Note the carefulness of the distinction.

What is implied here is that the exorcists had no spiritual standing, having no faith in the names they used.

"But you —what are you?" No spiritual standing.

v. 17. "And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

These professors were skilful men, who had the tradition which the Jewish exorcists traced back to Solomon; for Solomon was believed to have been as great in the spiritual world as in nature; the Scripture says that he had knowledge of all trees and creatures, and men came from far away to hear him; and the Jewish tradition added that he had the same insight into the spiritual world. The Seal of Solomon is the centre of Eastern fairy tales as having power over genii; and we find represented on old coins the pentacle, a combination of triangles, which was supposed to be the sign of the seal, and to have the power of keeping out evil spirits. It is strange that even here in old manor houses we find the pentacle carved on stairs or parts of the building,—this has

come down from that old tradition. Then these men who had all this tradition of Jewish and Ephesian magic were made a spectacle in the street, flying out of the house, naked and wounded. Now we see the reason of the simplicity of the means used by S. Paul and used in this place only; for the difference is marked between all the conjurations, and incantations and magical ceremonies, and the handkerchiefs and aprons used by the workman which availed to dispel disease and cast out evil spirits. "Not every-day powers" of the very most every-day articles defy and put to contempt the kingdom of magic, which over the whole world had its headquarters at Ephesus. Where was their magic, and all they could do and teach, when the reality was there working changes by a workman's hands?

The defeat of the Professors by their own Arts.

God spoke to the people in their own language; and put to shame the great kingdom of magic by the handkerchiefs and aprons from a workman. How much anyone misses who will not look at the contemptuous humour of this; who will not see how God acts on the whole nature; that He intended to reassure men almost as with a contemptuous smile. Do you not see the same contemptuous humour in the scene before Pharaoh, when the magicians cast down their rods, and Aaron his, and they became serpents, but Aaron's swallowed up the others[1]. It made the magicians disappear ludicrously from the stage. Where was their magic when his workman's bundle did this?—when God was there. And the power of Ephesian magic was shaken from the heart and head of both Jews and Greeks—of the Jews who despised the Greeks, and looked on Solomon as their master; of the Greeks who looked on the Jewish magic as barbarous, and had their own spells made out by their own ascetic professors.

Here comes in the simplicity of the handkerchiefs and aprons.

"Fear fell," the dear, sweet, wholesome, healthy fear, which in these people had become only fear of ghosts, spirits, sorceries. It was absolutely necessary that they should have bracing fear, the fear of God, to clear the ground before the love of God could approach which casts out all fear and leads us close to God, as dear children.

Then "Fear" came into play, dear, wholesome fear; to be well frightened is an experience worth having.

[1] Exodus vii. 8—12.

Fourth contest with Magic.

This is the fourth contest with magic in the Acts. I do not think that we can clearly understand it unless we realise that magic did not occupy in people's thoughts at all the same position as with us. In China the Mandarins are the great statesmen, and great generals of a learned and cultivated people, who have the polish of thousands of years of civilisation; they pin on their doors a charm to keep out evil spirits; or an invocation to the Fairy Fox[1] will be fastened up in the room of a general to keep him safe from the spirits of the air. Such things give us a faint idea of the condition of this time, in which men were all their lives beridden by the fear of dreadful demons ruling every detail of life; every complaint, every disease, every part of the house had its own deity, and the Jews and Syrians brought in more superstitions to add to the domination of life by spirits which could only be reached through invocations. All this was brought to contempt by the objects taken from S. Paul to those who were diseased: it made them feel the honour and beauty of soul and body in the hand of God; it shewed them that He could rule by the simplest things, and loved to rule without them. Why should anyone fear evil spirits when he might in one moment place himself under the protection of the Father of Spirits, where no torment can touch him?

Now notice the very different way in which magic is dealt with before, when the poor Pythoness was made by the masters to bring them gain; the sight of her caused S. Paul to be "grievously afflicted"—it is impossible to render the word with the force of the original—he was in most compassionate earnest, and he defied the whole city and the magistrates by setting the poor creature free: when Elymas tried to blind the proconsul in spirit, Paul blinded him physically: when Simon Magus begged to be enabled to do what the Apostles did and offered money for the power, he was told "thy money perish with thee." It was not until they came to the city where everything was beridden by imposture, that S. Paul turns the whole thing into contempt.

When Conjurors and Exorcists with their same demons were

[1] Cf. p. 243.

at work, then handkerchiefs and aprons came in, and a mere rout.

Now the people began to see that if the exorcist were powerless, Paul and Jesus were terribly real.

vv. 18, 19. "Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practised curious arts brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver."

"Meddling arts"—beyond bounds—no call for them when you can at once be in unity with the Father of Spirits.

"Curious arts" or magical arts: "curious," *περίεργα*, means meddling, very fussy, concerned with what they had nothing to do with; arts that passed the bounds of those things which it was right for men to deal with; there is here the same touch of contempt as throughout the whole narrative.

When it is not necessary to bring into your life any spirit but the Father of all, is it right to go seeking about among the powers admitted to be inferior? We have a lesson on meddling here, even for these days. Is it becoming, with such views as this narrative forces upon us, to be experimenting in the borderland? The phenomena may be imposture it is true, but the people who are interested in them believe that there is a real region into which it is possible to enter. Is it wise, and is it right to do so? I think we must be careful. I doubt whether, even in a serious manner, we have a right to be meddling. Refer to the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 18), which speaks of those who practise "a *voluntary* humility" (self-imposed asceticism, in which people emaciated themselves to make the flesh have less power, so that they might enter more into the spiritual power, which they believed to lie beyond), of "worshipping of angels," *dwelling* or "taking his stand," "on the things which he has not seen[1]," cultivating the inferior beings above the earth, out of the region of sight—"vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind and not holding fast the Head." All this suggests caution even in the things which are going on in our own day.

"They brought their books...and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." This gives us an idea of the prevalence of magic, for *all* the books in Ephesus could not have been burnt, and the price given is

[1] Cf. p. 245, note 1.

equal to about £2000. Does this not remind you of Savonarola and his holocaust?

v. 20. "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed."

Steady growth. "Grew and was strong." A "complete" affair: ready to move.

This is put in to tell us that it was a wholesome growth, not an overgrowth; the complete organisation that we see afterwards must have been formed during this time.

v. 21. "Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

"I must *see* Rome."

One likes this touch "I must *see* Rome." It shews how S. Paul was alive to the glory and beauty of the city, as later when he was in Asia Minor he walked across the plains, desiring to see Troy[1]: his spirit was full of the great purpose of the conversion of the world, but yet he says, "I must see Rome."

His taste and knowledge.

At this point a very sad story comes in, which is mentioned in the two Epistles to the Corinthians. While S. Paul was in Ephesus, the household of Chloe[2] brought him dreadful news from Corinth of things that were going on; that the Church which he had planted in Corinth had been divided into three great parties: that some attended sacrifices to idols, saying that the idol is nothing, and thus many were scandalised: they brought news of the terrible marriage of a man with his father's wife; of the disorder at the Holy Communion, which was eaten in the evening like a supper. It was held with prayer but each man brought his own supper, and "one is hungry and another is drunken." He heard also of the lawsuits being brought by Christians, before the heathen, and the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians is an agonised letter on account of these disorders. S. Paul had purposed to cross the Aegean, having promised to go to Corinth, but when he had heard these things he thought it better not to present himself then; therefore he sent two of his followers across, Timothy the dear disciple, and Erastus the Corinthian, chamberlain of the city[3]; he determined not to go himself, thinking it

Distressing news from Corinth.

Mission of Timotheus and Erastus.

[1] Cf. pp. 500 f. [2] 1 Cor. i. 11. [3] Cf. p. 496 and note.

Changed plans.

better to give them time to receive his messengers and letter, and he went instead to visit the Churches of the north—Beroea and Thessalonica. Then as he came back through Achaia he found letters from Corinth brought by his messengers Timothy and Erastus which made a change. In his second Epistle he tells us about this answer. A great revulsion of feeling had been caused by the letter, the Christians were ready to make up their differences, and were only angry that he had not come himself. The marriage had been dissolved, the man was penitent; the Church had been if anything too stern[1]. These two epistles are two of the most passionate letters that ever a man wrote: in the first we have that wonderful chapter on the Resurrection; of the second it may be asked whether it is not one of the finest compositions in the language of man in its passionate devotion, thankfulness, love. These two letters were written at Ephesus.

v. 22. "And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while."

Thus, when he sent the letter first, his messengers took the same route that he would go by, while he stayed in Asia for a while; this stay gave occasion for the most wonderful incident.

There is a literal lesson in περίεργα, "Do not meddle," and a spiritual lesson.

1. Turning out "evil spirits" for wrong reasons.

As regards the events then, this is a wonderful bit of antient life, and there is a literal lesson wrapped up for us in it, warning us against the "meddling arts." But further, difficult as this passage is, does it not contain a spiritual lesson? Turning out an evil spirit is not easy: what the Jews were trying to do was to expel the demon power for a wrong reason. It is not possible for any of us to expel an evil spirit, evil habits or thoughts, for a wrong reason: and this event shews in an external way how dangerous such an attempt may be. If we determine to give up anything that is evil for the sake of making progress in the world, if we give up irreligion for the sake of getting a good character, for influence, for importance, how dangerous it is; and it is almost

Worldly progress.

[1] 2 Cor. i. 23—ii. 11.

certain that the spirit which is gone will be succeeded by some more powerful, more ruling spirit of evil. I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I say that there is a great danger in doing good for the sake of example.

"For the sake of example."

Suppose that a thing is seen to be necessarily dangerous to a large number of the poor. It is one thing to give it up in order to encourage others by shewing them that such sacrifice is possible; and that we can surrender it even although it is not harmful to ourselves. But it is too often recommended that we should do such things for the *sake of example*, and I doubt whether, looking at the inner spirit, such a course is right or wise. I was startled once by the vehement utterance of a well-known person, who finished a sermon with the words: "To do good for the sake of setting an example is simply silly." Such an utterance is useful; and I feel inclined to say that to do good for the sake of setting an example is more than silly.

Is it wise to make any religious or spiritual difference in our own habits for any other reason than that it is good or bad? Ought we not to take every case into consideration on its own merits? Even if a yoke on the neck of others is good, is it likely to be successful to put a yoke on our own neck in order to shew them what to do? I doubt whether it does good, and it is not beneficial to our own souls to take any fresh duty except because it is good. And after all what force is there in the argument, "I do it because it is necessary for you, it is not necessary for me, but I do it to set you an example"? I want you to see the difference between doing a thing to shew people that it can be done, and doing it because it is not your own duty but theirs. Is it not better to teach that it should be done, rather than to make an example of yourselves when there is no reason in circumstances or character, for your doing it?

I know it is not desirable to multiply scruples, but we should watch our way that everything may be regulated by its rightness or wrongness, its advisability, or the reverse, to ourselves; I must consider the *effects* of my action no doubt, but if I give up a wrong thing for the sake of example that

means that I give it up not for the effect on my own conscience, but because I want to produce an effect on the conscience of someone else. This leaves one in the condition of not thoroughly purifying one's own heart, nor yielding a thorough obedience to conscience for its own sake, and yet getting the credit of doing so. I cannot help thinking that one's own heart gets a little hardened by thinking, not whether it is right or wrong for oneself to give up a habit or take up a certain rule of life, but only thinking whether it is good for other people that one should do so. This is a subtlety which may make no difference in conduct, but yet make a great difference in the attitude to self and to conscience. And I am not sure that "to do good for the sake of setting an example" is not one of the earliest steps of what our Lord called "acting." The objection is sometimes made that we may hurt others by carrying on some practice which is bad for them, but we seldom hurt those whose opinion is worth anything if we really keep to the witness of our own hearts.

2. Playing with Holy Names.

And there is a second spiritual lesson to be drawn from this judgment on those who called over the man who was possessed the name of Jesus.

All of us know what it is to see the effect of religious motives, or religious language, on a young, tender or ignorant mind. If we see this, and if we use it without seeking ourselves to be whole-hearted, we are doing what will one day be detected; and there is no shock greater to a young and innocent soul than to have walked in the way pointed out from the holiest motives, and to find out that the person who pointed to this way had not after all pure and holy motives, and was not really, but only in words, so moved. This is a great cause of wreck in these days. It is of no use to say, 'I bid you do this by Jesus whom Paul preaches,' if Jesus and Paul are not people whom we ourselves are willing to be guided by. If you believe that you could guide a child, or lead any person better if you used the language of religion, remember that one word simply said from the true position that you hold, is more powerful than the best you

To flee naked and wounded, believing nothing.

can say out of the convictions of other people; there is nothing like doing your best in heart and life, to urge other people to their best. You may have the intense joy of seeing those whom you would help going far faster than you on their way to God, and you may commit them with perfect confidence into His hands.

If the first lesson is not to do good for a wrong reason, the second is not to play with holy names, never to come short of conviction in what you express.

3. Give up false influences.

There is a third lesson, on using a false influence in things known not to be good. A wife does what she thinks wrong, or connives at it, or gives up what she thinks right, because she thinks that by so doing, or surrendering, she will keep closer to her husband; and a mother acts thus with her son, to keep her influence with him; either conniving at, or assenting to evil, or giving up something in life, or language, which is clear to her, hoping by the sacrifice to keep power and influence. But she thereby gives up the only influence which would ever help him or her. It would be better to risk a little alienation now, if one thinks of what may be hereafter. When the son or husband is brought over to your own point of view, will he not think how you forsook it? When the critical moment comes and his eyes are opened, will it not hurt him then much more than now, to feel that, for an inferior reason, you gave up something important that should have been for your happiness? The time will come in answer, perhaps, to your prayers; light will be given, true and false will be seen, and he will see that you, who had been so long looked up to as a model of what was true, were willing for temporary reasons to give up what you thought right. It is the strength of society that wives, daughters, sisters, have kept up so high a standard; if at first, there is a little loss of influence through keeping up the habit, you have the great power of years at hand at the time when it is most wanted. Remember what S. Peter says about the unbelieving man being won, not by the concessions, but by the conversation of his wife, *pure* in the highest sense, as not admitting mixed motives—pure, unmixed knowledge of

what is right. These things are true now, as they were true of old, and they are set forth here; the men who tried to cast out the evil spirit, by the power of a Name which they did not follow, are put to utter discomfiture and shame; while God put to flight the armies of the aliens, not by Paul's preaching, but in his working at the loom.

XLIII.

March 11th, 1891.

Christ and the Great Towns.

Acts xix. 23—41. *Commercial Religion* (*continued*).

Ephesus.

Ephesian Cultus of the Nature-Power. The Temple and the 'Diopetes' figure. The 'Sacristan' City (35). The May Month of Artemis. Silver Shrine Makers. Commercial Divinity.

The Jew Apologist (33) unheard. (? Bronze Maker of 2 Tim. iv. 14.)

The 'Asiarchs' (31). Regard of public men for S. Paul.

The 'Recorder' (35), his law-terms and policy and sense.

The 'Proconsuls' (38), singular term and coincidence.

23. Riot due to delay. 'Regrettable incidents': are God's means. The end of that day's work. How not to dwell on second causes; to rise to highest motives (1 Cor. xv. 22; Phil. iii. 10).

I have received a letter, such as I am always most glad to receive, shewing me that I did not speak with sufficient clearness last time on the subject of example. I want to say a few more words about it.

I did not mean to say that example is not a most potent factor in life. Imitation is one of the strongest passions, it is the earliest way in which young minds are formed, they love to do things which are done by their elders, to whom they look up as models of all that is good: children look up to their elders and love them because they believe them to be really good, and that that for which we pray is fulfilled in them:

"Thou requirest truth in the inward parts, thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly." It never comes into the child's mind that the father and mother he venerates are acting a part for the sake of influence; nothing could so destroy their influence in the mind of a growing child as the thought that the parent appeared to be good for the sake of making him what they wished him to be. What I wanted to bring out was the terrible contrast presented, if these, in setting an example, are not truly that which the children believe them to be.

No one thinks of abstaining from stealing for the sake of setting an example. The very thought is repugnant to a noble mind.

But there are indifferent cases about which there may be some misunderstanding; as in the case S. Paul works out at length, of abstinence from meats offered to idols, when those who abstained knew that the idol had no power over God's creation to pollute it; in this case S. Paul says he would not eat meat at all if there was any risk of making his brother offend. Looked at roughly, this is like setting an example.

But S. Paul would not abstain in order to make someone else abstain: what he does is to refuse to eat the idol food because someone else will have his conscience troubled if he does so. Those who cannot get rid of the idea that an idol is an evil spirit, possessing power to trouble God's world, will be troubled in their consciences if they see someone eating the thing that is polluted. S. Paul says he will not do what is liable to misconstruction.

The case I took last time of abstinence for the sake of example from the drinks which work such mischief, is open to a misunderstanding.

You may think the law of restraint better than the law of abstinence, that it is better to use temperately the creature of God, than not to touch it; yet you nevertheless may be frequently brought into the company of one who exceeds in drink. You may very rightly think it is good to abstain altogether under such circumstances. But why? You are

not pretending to think the touch and taste evil, nor to shew that you think abstinence in itself desirable; if people think moderation better than abstinence and yet pretend that they are doing a virtuous thing in abstaining, they are making a mistake which will probably be found out.

But why should you then abstain? It is in order that the friend for whose sake you do so may say, 'Is this drink after all necessary?' You may shew those who, once partaking of it, become unable to restrain themselves, how possible it is to do without it altogether: this is an example in one sense, not in another. Such people believe that it is almost essential to them, and you know that if they take only a little, they are in danger. You wish therefore to make it clear that your health, your spirits, your power of doing your duty can be sustained without it. In this way a man may make himself an example by changing something which he believes in itself is not evil, in order to shew the possibility of self-denial by the exercise of it.

We must give an example to those who look up to us, who regulate their conduct by ours. It is a deeply-touching thought, which makes many older people begin a new line of conduct, for they feel that the way they are going on will lead to misunderstanding, and will not impress on young souls how necessary self-discipline is, and how possible. But in this case they are set, not on the idea of setting an example, but of being truly self-disciplined.

There is danger, moral danger, in doing the same thing on different principles. And there must be great danger of getting to lead a double life. Are we not entering on the same path as the Pharisees if we are not anxious that we may have the principle of good for ourselves, but enter on the path of good for the sake of creating a useful influence?

Both lives are superior to those of the careless multitude, who do what they please, for it is only a good heart which will influence itself for the sake of setting an example to others; but to do anything merely to set them an example surely implies that where example had no influence one

would be in the same state of mind as the common multitude which pleases itself: and the good heart has before it so much higher a walk, so much more glorious a reward in being sincere like God Himself, in loving things God loves: it dare not then be a snare to others.

To sum up:

If a thing is good it is not a point of view worthy of those who seek to follow the Master, to do it in order to set an example. If 'setting an example' is what they aim at, they will set a far finer example by not thinking about example-setting.

If we wish others to be guided by our conduct to high and true things we must first wish not to feel this, we must leave it behind, it will take care of itself; the highest example is set by truly doing high things, like God.

Now we come to a different sort of scene from that which we have been studying lately of the quiet workshop, the constant conversation, with more and more important persons coming in to talk with S. Paul: we come to the wildest tumult that has ever been described with such touches of reality.

This is how it happened.

vv. 23—25. "And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, (or 'My men') ye know that by this business we have our wealth."

Silver shrine makers. Commercial Divinity.

This man was a head artist in the trade of silver workers. The trade had a specially religious character, produced *objets de piété* like those you see in the windows of shops abroad near great convents or places of pilgrimage. The craftsmen, or artists, and their workmen; the designers and the artisans were gathered together; it was a real trade gathering.

v. 26. "And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and

turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands."

"Almost throughout all Asia." The heathen themselves are conscious of the work. "This Paul" is quite as contemptuous in the original as in English.

"They be no gods which are made with hands": Paul has inculcated this awful heresy. The "shrine" is a small copy of the temple of Artemis in which stood a figure of the goddess; these were sold, and carried far and wide. Among the many coins we have of this wealthy city, there is one shewing on the reverse what these shrines were like; they exhibited the pediment of the temple, with pillars at the side, and the image of the goddess seen through them. Demetrius urges: 'There were many devotees among the residents and the people flocking to and fro, and Paul has persuaded them that there is nothing divine in the goddess.'

Shocked at the heresy.

v. 27. "And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Ephesian Cultus. Its prevalence; worship of a Nature-Power.

The speech of the silversmith is worth study, he does not exaggerate the greatness of the cultus of the virgin goddess: it was true that "not only Asia but the world" worshipped her. The goddess was called Diana by the Romans, and Artemis by the Greeks; she represents a form of worship, which is much older than the mythical system then prevalent, the worship of the Nature-Power.

Mankind, in most parts of the world, gazed with astonishment at birth, creation, growth; gazed with astonishment at the coming back of spring, the earth, bursting with fresh fertility every year, at the trees and the corn, producing fruit and seed, which sustain the tribes of men and creatures; men marvelled to see the budding beauty of children, the power exhibited in their intelligence, they marvelled to find their hands becoming busy; but they had not drawn the lesson which S. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, says they ought to draw (ch. i. 20), "For the invisible things of Him since the

creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made." Yet among these were thinking men and philosophers who, as simple souls do, understood that "the things that are made" were revelations of some unseen Power; and they concluded that the time would come when he, whom they looked up to, in his strange powers would be brought before them: that one day there would come an explanation. But designing people got hold of the multitude, taught them that the power of nature itself was the thing to be worshipped; and the result was worship like that of Cybele, or the earliest worship in India; nothing else than the entire consecration of the powers in nature. The powers visible in nature have, we know, the taint of sin. We know whence that is; but they knew not, and when men had taken to the worship of the powers in nature they did not go behind them, to see something more powerful, more holy. Such was even the worship of this virgin goddess, though it was higher than some forms of nature worship, than that of Bacchus or Dionysus—of powers that are vile.

The centre of the worship at Ephesus was the image of the goddess, shrined in one of the stateliest temples of the world. This image, as it has been described, and is represented in statues and coins, was utterly different from the glorious statuary of Greece, as different as possible from the familiar figure of Diana. The lower part of the goddess was a pillar, narrowing to the feet; round it were heads of oxen, garlands of flowers, bees, whatever was thought most marvellous among nature-powers. The bosom of the goddess was covered with organs for giving milk to all nature. The figure was black; there was a dispute as to whether it was made of pine or of olive, but it was very antient, belonging to the primeval worship of nature[1].

The Diopetes.

Is it not strange that the cultivated nations of the world should have poured their treasure round this image? It is strange, but it is like modern days. In places of pilgrimage to the Virgin transformed by superstition into a goddess, we find that some of the images adored with the greatest veneration

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XVI. lxxix. 7.

are black[1]. One little head of the Virgin, among those supposed to have been painted by S. Luke, is black or brown. The objects of the most constant veneration of all Europe have been, and even now are, the most utterly old, worthless, ugly representations, so that it seems as if God meant to pour divine scorn on the notion of a goddess.

Turn to the speech of the townclerk for a moment. In verse 35 he calls the city the "temple-keeper" of the goddess.

The "Sacristan" City.

"Temple-keeper" is rather "temple-sweeper," the title of the sacristan. The greatest title of honour of the city of Ephesus was that it was the Sacristan of Diana. We find that the Emperors several times conferred this title anew; it is the word inscribed on great inscriptions, and on the most valuable coins.

The May Month of Artemis.

Notice the singular similarities of worship wherever the worship of many gods begins. Those who know the custom of another Church will be astonished to hear that the month of May was dedicated to the goddess[2]. As May is dedicated to that holy one whom I will not name, since she is worshipped with a worship her Son and she would repudiate, so May was given up in the city of Ephesus to the worship of Artemis.

The Temple.

The temple of Artemis was larger than the largest cathedral, 425 feet long and 220 feet wide; the temple now standing was the third on the site, the previous one had been burnt down. We can hardly realise its magnificence, but there are one or two points which may give us some idea of it. There were 124 columns 60 ft. high, each given by a king; for centuries these columns were perfect, the bases were covered with magnificent sculpture[3]. We have

[1] It is interesting to note in this connection that Aahmes Nefertari, who of all Egyptian queens was most frequently adored with divine honours, is represented as black. Professor Petrie conjectures that this is accounted for by her partly Berberine origin, but as her mummy case shews no traces of this, it is at least an open question whether the colouring is not rather symbolic, as black or green colouring is used for the dead and divinities of the under-world. The colour, like much other Egyptian symbolism, may thus have been transferred to the religious uses of other nations.

[2] The month corresponded more strictly to April.

[3] Cf. *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. I. p. 323.

two of these bases now in the British Museum, the base of one of the earlier columns found in the recent investigation, and one magnificent base of the rebuilt temple. The former bears the name of Croesus, the antient king of Lydia.

Then it contained curiosities, in themselves worth mentioning: there were the greatest paintings of the two greatest painters of ancient days, Apelles and Parrhasius; there was a sculpture of Pheidias, and one by Scopas, who was thought by some art critics of the time to have surpassed even Pheidias. The temple was one of the seven wonders of the world.

I mention all this that you may see what that power was which was working against the temple, the power that sought to destroy the worship of the powers of nature; a power at the weaver's loom, a man who had in his heart the Spirit of God, and was trying to draw mankind to worship God, and to know Him as revealed in Jesus Christ; a man who believed that He would be in the spirit of that man who sought Him.

The Cathedral Establishment.

And it was against this place, the marvel of the age, the wonder of the world, that this man was struggling. There was an establishment of priests at Ephesus, as in other Asiatic cities, far surpassing the greatest college foundation; at a certain age these might retire to live in peace and sacredness. It would seem that all the knowledge of the earth would be brought home here; and that the glory and greatest pride of men would be to add something to the temple of Ephesus: its power seemed impregnable. Who would have thought a man in Aquila's workshop could have done anything against it? Yet about 50 years later it was probably like those temples of which Pliny wrote to Trajan, that the courts were deserted[1], and it was scarcely possible to sell the sacrificial offerings.

This downfall had begun; Demetrius had not the insight to foresee how it would end, but he foresaw some danger where this heresy was preached, he knew that there was no power in the goddess to help those who brought votive offerings and kissed the silver shrine.

[1] Pliny, *Epp.* x. 96.

v. 28. "And when they heard this"—the speech of Demetrius—"they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Next Scene. The Theatre.

They rushed into the theatre—in its own way a marvel like the temple. It was unroofed and built of marble, and seated 50,000 persons[1]. This was where those public assemblies, which were not of a regular nature, were held.

They "rushed": it is singular that an antient orator speaks of the people on another great occasion 'rushing into the theatre.' What a mob! the whole city rushing into the theatre out of pure anger. As far as Paul himself was concerned he only looked on it as an opportunity; he might be torn in pieces, his disciples expelled; he thought of nothing but to speak.

vv. 29—32. "And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain also of the chief officers of Asia, being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

There is a touch of satire here; "the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

The Asiarchs.

"The "chief officers" of Asia called "Asiarchs," are nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament; they were some of the principal people of the world, called the 'ten first men of Asia'; ten were elected annually, and had to keep up the magnificent spectacles of May; to provide exhibitions in the theatres, and bring beasts from Africa for the fight. They were chosen for their wealth, and had to provide out of their own funds all that was necessary: the cost was so great that if anyone had served as Asiarch for a year he was never expected to do so again.

The Asiarchs had already heard enough to respect Paul.

[1] *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. I. p. 327.

Respect of public men for S. Paul.

Notice the respect which he gets everywhere from public men; from Sergius Paulus; from Gallio, who would not allow him to be brought before him; from Festus, who heard him from time to time; from Agrippa, who was so anxious to hear him; and the Asiarchs had already heard enough of him to respect him, although public persons were not likely at that time to take much interest at first in a travelling missionary.

His quiet treatment. Hint for missionaries.

Our missionaries should learn much from the conduct of S. Paul; he had this one thing at heart, to do away with what he called "these vanities," and accept the service of the living God, yet he did not begin, as some of our rash missionaries, by vituperating the Ephesian worship; the recorder says he is not a blasphemer; he was going to build up among these people, but he did not begin by pulling down that which, however miserable it might be, was their best. We have made so many mistakes; our zealous men have begun by deriding the idol-worship, not reckoning that they ought to pay the greatest respect to that which is the best that is known. We should do well to remember that a man cannot do better than his best. At Athens S. Paul shewed that the temples made with hands cannot contain God; but he goes on to quote the testimony of their *own* poets to this.

Do not pull to pieces any man's best, but take hold of it, shew how, if it is true, it will lead on to higher things.

vv. 33—34. "And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Jew Apologist unheard.

A Jew in a case of idolatry!

The Jews made a great mistake in putting forward Alexander[1], they thought it a fine opportunity to explain to the people that they were not Christians, and desired to separate themselves from Paul, who had brought such trouble.

But it was too absurd to put forward a Jew, as against the blasphemers of the goddess.

[1] Was this Alexander the χαλκεύς? cf. 2 Tim. iv. 14.

v. 35. "And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?"

The 'Recorder:'

The 'townclerk' or recorder was a great person; the date of the year was given by his name, and he had care of the archives. His speech is full of technical law-terms; he shewed great tact, knowing that if this was heard of at Rome, the case would be taken up.

his law terms: his balancing tact.

"The image which fell down from Jupiter." No one, probably, thought that the recorder believed this; but he felt it his duty to quiet the people, so he surrendered wholesale to their prejudices.

v. 36. "Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash."

'Who can mind what a Jewish missionary says? You can't see the temple, the theatre, you can't know of its reputation over the whole world, and think that it has anything to fear. But what have you done?'

vv. 37, 38. "For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another."

"The courts are open," "there are proconsuls," "accuse one another." All these are technical expressions.

The "proconsuls," extraordinary term and coincidence.

"There are proconsuls." This is a very fine point, and one of those things which shew that this history must be written by people who know all about it. There was only one proconsul in a province; you could no more talk of "proconsuls" than of "Prime Ministers" or "Lord Mayors." Yet the recorder says, "there are proconsuls." This has been brought forward as a mark of imperfect acquaintance with the time, and the system of Roman magistracy. But the actual state of things was as follows. This was the year 54. Nero came to the throne on the 13th of October 54; the Proconsul of Asia was Silanus, a great man in the

immediate line of descent from Augustus. In this position he was dangerous to the Emperor, who could not claim such immediate descent: if Nero was to become unpopular he would be attacked, and Silanus would be made Emperor. Nero's own mother had feared danger from the family of Silanus, and before Nero came to the throne she had caused the death of the elder brother, so that this Silanus was the representative of the family. As soon as he could, Nero had him poisoned. But the thing which most shews the horrible corruption of government was that he was poisoned by the officers next in power, Celes and Helius[1].

For some time we do not read anything about his successors. Proconsuls were the only persons before whom trials could be conducted, and it was not possible, according to Roman theory, that there should not be proconsular power, and these men who poisoned Silanus may have exercised it.

When we see what looks like a mistake verified by such historical probabilities as these, we see that the "Acts" must have been written shortly after these events, when the author would still remember that there were two "proconsuls[2]."

The recorder ends:

vv. 39—41. "But if ye seek any thing about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause *for it*: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly."

There is one lesson for ourselves in daily life and thought from this.

The riot due to *delay*; "regrettable incidents." Such are God's means.

What was it that caused the riot? We see that S. Paul's work had been done; for the "word of the Lord...prevailed" (*v.* 20); and we read (*v.* 21) that "when these things were ended he had purposed to go to Macedonia"; we saw why he delayed[3] and during that delay came the riot.

If this had been our own case, should we not have said,

[1] *Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. I. p. 337 f.

[2] Cf. the explanation of Bishop Lightfoot, who regards the above as a "rhetorical plural." *Contemp. Review* for 1878, p. 275.

[3] pp. 471, f.

'What a pity to have made the avoidable delay; all had gone so well; the Church was organised in the cities. Then came the break up, the town became excited, and Paul had to go out with ignominy and in danger. What a pity the smooth course was broken'? Are we not always saying in the saddest times, 'If I had known, I should have taken such precautions. If I had only sent for the physician two or three hours sooner it would have been so different. What a pity I did not exercise more care?' But all really turned on things so different. We are constantly thinking of secondary causes, lamenting some little thing, the moment in which an unfortunate word was said, or an unfortunate delay occurred. But, if circumstances of that kind do affect so hugely the future of our lives, must we not rather think that God's means of acting are these very 'regrettable incidents,' sharp arrows shot from high, heavenly battlements by unseen hands, to wound, break down, overthrow and stir up? Shall we not be much happier if we look forward and see what great purposes are brought out through long-continued misfortune?

How not to dwell on secondary causes, nor on secondary motives.

Consider here the narrowness of the issue, its simplicity, and the magnitude of the disturbance, and disgrace. Ought he, the great teacher of wisdom, to regret this? What came of it? It was brought home to all by the lips of the great enemies of S. Paul, that what was in question was whether the gods made with hands were gods at all. It could not have been better published through the whole of Ephesus whether the olive-wood statue was a power. This incident preached the beginning of the Gospel to every creature.

This day's work! the first which brought out into such tremendous relief, "*Are* they gods which are made with hands?"

S. Paul never blasphemed the goddess, but the riot published everywhere that some quiet people were prepared to live and die for the fact that they were no gods which were made with hands.

On S. Paul himself, this day must have had a strong effect, one cannot but think that it must have heightened and deepened him.

When he was writing the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians he brought this event up to the height of the great hope

This day threw him on the Resurrection.

of the Resurrection of the dead, for the climax against those who said there was no Resurrection of the dead is this:

"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die[1]."

'What meaning is there in my whole ministry if I—brought face to face with twenty-five thousand people, hurled into the arena, as it were, to fight with the wild beasts of Africa for my life—cannot point to the fact that I shall rise from the dead? But the meaning of that day and hour is that misfortune, pain, and trouble are nothing, only doors through which we walk to attain eternal life. What meaning is there in any sorrow, any loss, any destruction, that comes to us from Christ, unless it is a way to everlasting glory?'

Is it not magnificently emphatic? But even this is not so deep, not so emphatic as what S. Paul says in the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 8—11), "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." 'That I may be like Him, suffer with Him to the utmost.' *v.* 12, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus." This is the height of S. Paul's teaching.

Do we ask where he obtained such insight? It was when he was ready to present himself with such courage to the mob in the theatre that day in Ephesus that the Resurrection of the dead flashed into his mind with such certainty. He did not think of the Resurrection because of the yearning for the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 32; cf. p. 457.

joy and happiness and peace of a life in which there is no distraction, but because of the desire that he might be like Christ.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him[1]."

Surely here is a tremendous power which can enable us to cast utterly away regrets, mistakes, for it lands us in thinking and living in the hope that we shall be made like Christ.

I am afraid of going too high lest you should think I am saying that *I* have done this; however imperfect one's faith is, I know that this is true, that it is real. We shall find "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed[2]." Consider this comparison. We may take all the suffering and anxiety, all that our own folly and stupidity, and wickedness pulls down upon us, and put them as stones under our feet, to rise to the Resurrection of the dead, in which we shall be like Him.

"What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ[3]."

In these quiet hours we get a glimpse of the great spirits that have passed; let us pray that not only we ourselves, but all who are trying with us to rise to the life of Christ, may understand all that happens to us, may use it for onward progress, may attain to the Resurrection of the dead.

[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] Ro. viii. 18. [3] Phil. iii. 7.

XLIV.

March 18th, 1891.

Journey to Jerusalem.

Acts xx. 1—16.

(xix. Ephesus. Commercial Religion. Its business principles developed in every rank: Credit in town and country: Character used as Capital: Insolvency.)

The Companions of S. Paul; gathered from the series of Towns. "Came into Greece," all that is covered by this:

Time given to Corinth to bethink itself—with wonderful effect.

Three months' work at Corinth; the homeward route changed.

Easter Day at Philippi, 3rd April, A.D. 58. [A.D. 57.]

The Sunday Evening Service at Troas; The fatal accident and resuscitation; Eucharist.

Reasons for Pentecost at Jerusalem. 'Classical' route—if thought of.

This Eucharist. Its obvious place in their Christian Life. Bearing of Miracle. Before Dawn. 'The Lord's Table' (1 Cor. x. 21). The One Bread.

What hinders us from being "nearer to God"? What will bring people more to Communion? What effect will it have on "indifferentism"?

I want to say again, first of all, a very few words upon our subject of last time. We have been through these cities, the last most striking of all—the city of commercial religion. Corinth was the place of commercial luxury, yet people were ashamed of that spirit. But in Ephesus the spirit was as

gainful, as greedy, as avaricious as it could be, yet they were not ashamed of it, because it was so religious.

But we should be betrayed into a mistake if we thought that the spirit of the temple of Ephesus was gone, or that commercial religion is confined to the craftsmen, or to any class who see that they are dependent *directly* on their religion. Commercial religion may be as strong in an aristocracy, in royalty, or in a Christian clergy, as in Demetrius and his craftsmen.

This spirit may be in any system; however honourable the system may seem if you once act on the thought, "by it we get our wealth," the good of the system is at an end for you; however noble it may be, its magnificence is near its close; a great system does not exist for us, but we for it, and for something beyond to work out for the honour of God—the ends for which the system was founded.

If the system of Church patronage is used for enriching the families of those who hold patronage, the whole system receives a shock. We have not recovered to-day the state we were brought into in the most prosperous time of the Church; nor the feeling roused against it, expressed by a thousand mouths. Nothing but the most perfect Christian honour in patrons and clergy will suffice to wipe out the effects of the time when it was distinctly avowed, "by it we get our wealth"; when offices in the Church were the reward of political services, or the provision for younger children. How does that spirit differ from this at Ephesus? We can, if we will, *work* religion—'exploiter' it; anything in which human advancement comes in can be used, not for real advancement, but for our own selfish benefit. Is not this 'commercial religion'? How many people, while they live in the country, are most regular in attending Services at their parish church; and how many when they come up to town get credit by appearing to be above all religious prejudices. In the country they gain credit from country neighbours, which they would not think it wise to sacrifice by inattention to religious observances; in London they get as much credit in the circles

in which they move, for being free-spoken, and above the least touch of Christian superstition. Thus they reap two harvests. Very often this comes from a want of reflection and is done with a certain degree of unconsciousness: but even in the country, where they attend church, they have after church, with an inner circle of friends, conversation of a different tendency. Is it not true that such people have no right to the credit which they get? Whether they gain the good opinion of the simple or the admiration of talkers, they are as much dealing with religion for profit as the poor silversmiths of Ephesus.

Again, when people of high character use character as capital, religion becomes commercial.

A manufacturer once said to me that the most expensive trade is the trading of a great firm on their high character; when trusting to their high character they begin to send out bad rails, bad agricultural machines. He spoke of a firm whose work was perfect until they had well established their character in the world; then they began to make a large profit by using inferior materials, and inferior workmanship. We may apply this saying to influence of all kinds—political, social, religious; in all these things character is the most expensive capital which can be employed; it is paid out and not recovered, it ends in hopeless insolvency.

There is no greater mistake when we read the Bible, than to picture the circumstances only as circumstances of the past, to be unable to discover at work now the same principles which we there look down on as degrading, and to fancy those principles are dead.

The Companions of S. Paul; gathered from the series of towns.

We have seen Christ enter the gateways of all these cities; Christ, invisible, by the side of His servant Paul. We have seen what He suffered, and wrought, in the military colony of Philippi; in the free town of Thessalonica; in the quiet country town of Beroea, where the people had more leisure, and more spirit to search for truth; in the university town of Athens, with its philosophic passion; in the city of commercial luxury, Corinth; in the city of commercial religion

of Ephesus. S. Paul had not been through all these cities without reaping a harvest; and what had he reaped? He had gathered a wonderful band together, one or two from each place.

v. 1. "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed for to go into Macedonia."

He went from Asia Minor across to the Golden Horn,—to what is now Turkey, and down through Attica to Corinth.

vv. 2, 3. "And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia."

He would take ship at Corinth, and go northward along the coast of Greece, for they dare not go straight across the Aegean. From Turkey he would turn south, along the coast of Asia Minor. Finding the plot, he determined to return through Macedonia.

Here is Paul's harvest.

v. 4. "And there accompanied him as far as Asia Sopater of Beroea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."

"Sopater of Beroea," from the quiet country town; "of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus"; "Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy," gathered in when he was on his way to the great towns; "and of Asia," Ephesus or its neighbourhood, "Tychicus and Trophimus." Besides this Gaius we find from the Epistle to the Corinthians, that there was another Gaius of Corinth; we hear there also of Stephanas, whose household was one of the first baptised, and Fortunatus, one of the first converts, and Achaicus. He had had with him also at Corinth no less a person than Luke, who had, perhaps, been working at Thessalonica and went northwards with him. Titus also, his dear friend, as dear as Timothy, had been with him there, and Jason, whose house had been wrecked for sheltering S. Paul.

v. 5. "But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas."

It was quicker to go by sea; so, as S. Paul had intended, they coasted to Troas, at the north-west corner of the Levant. This is the district of Troy; Troy itself was as desolate as it remained in our time until excavations began; but there was another city on the site founded by Alexander.

v. 6. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days."

"We sailed away." Without a word about himself, you see that Luke has joined S. Paul. Luke had accompanied him to Philippi, when the rest had gone on.

"After the days of unleavened bread"; that is, after the Passover; this gives us the date, the very month, and the day; thus S. Paul kept his Easter at Philippi, and some important reason must have made him stay. S. Paul had sent Titus on a difficult mission[1]; he had wished to go to Corinth, but would not go "with a rod"; therefore he sent messengers before him, of whom Titus was one, to bring the Corinthians to a better mind, that he himself might go to them later in their repentance. He went towards Corinth by the Troad and Macedonia from rioting Ephesus; expecting Titus to meet him in the Troad. When he did not find him in the Troad he was unable to bear the suspense; and considering the intense devotion of S. Paul to his missionary work you will see how striking the passage is in which he writes (2 Cor. ii. 12), "Now when I came to Troas for the Gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord" —a magnificent opportunity for preaching Christ—"I had no relief for my spirit because I found not Titus my brother"—he could not account for the fact that Titus had not come—"but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia." Thus he opens his great heart; with all that he was burning

Time given to Corinth to bethink itself —with wonderful effect.

Having sent Titus on so difficult a mission he moves upward by the Troad.

In Troad unable to bear the suspense about Titus.

"Cor Mundi." Moves on to Philippi—six years after his first visit.

[1] See p. 471. On the probability that Titus completed the projected mission of Timothy, cf. *Biblical Essays*, pp. 273 ff., *The Mission of Titus to the Corinthians*, by J. B. Lightfoot, London. 1893.

to do for Christ, he broke off his preaching in his love for Titus and his anxiety for the Corinthians, to see, if possible, what had become of him. So he went on to Macedonia; of which also he writes (2 Cor. vii. 5), "For even when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."

Then Titus came and all was right.

Arrival of Titus with good news of all.

2 Cor. vii. *v.* 6. "Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus." And he brought good news. For when the Corinthians found that, on their account, S. Paul did not come, they were broken-hearted.

vv. 7, 8. "And not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more. For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret; for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season."

After he had sent the letter he feared it might be too severe.

vv. 9—14. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this self-same thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. So although I wrote unto you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God. Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf, I was

not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also, which I made before Titus, was found to be truth."

In effect he says, 'I told him I was sure he could bring you round, and he did.'

Was there ever such a man in the intensity of his feeling for these people, the intensity of his feeling for Titus? We can understand why Augustine gave him the beautiful title, 'Cor Mundi.'

So much movement is contained in this short passage. In any summary of S. Paul's life you will find how much is compressed in this word in Acts xx. *v.* 2 about going "into Greece."

The collection for poor saints at Jerusalem.

The almsgiving system.

He was making a collection for the starving saints thrown out of work at Jerusalem; and his system of almsgiving asks that Christians shall lay by what they can spare out of their wages on the first day of the week. Then he sent round his messengers to collect it[1], and the bounty must have supported at Jerusalem the Christians who were excluded from employment.

Three months at Corinth. Paul's final composing of troubles at Corinth.

S. Paul spent three months at Corinth; you will find in the Epistle of Clement of Rome an indication of the way in which the troubles there were finally composed by S. Paul[2].

During this time S. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, which Coleridge calls "the most profound work in existence[3]."

A plot sends S. Paul round by Macedonia to the Troad, changing his route and dividing his party, some of whom went straight on to Troas while he remained at Philippi until after Easter Day; this fell on the 3rd of April in the year 58. [A.D. 57.] Then he was five days travelling, and stayed in Troas for a week. On the first day of the week, the 16th of April, that is, they gathered together to "break bread."

Easter Day at Philippi.

Bear in mind that the way in which the account in the Acts fits in with the indications given in the Epistles is a proof of the authenticity of documents like these.

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 1 ff., and cf. 2 Cor. viii. 1—15.

[2] For example, "You detested any division or schism." Clement ii. Cf. 1 Cor. xi. 18.

[3] *Table-Talk*, vol. II., p. 193 [ed. 1835].

This is a solemn, beautiful passage.

v. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight."

The Eucharist ἐν τῷ ὑπερῴῳ.

To *break bread* means to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. The word might be used of taking a meal, but it is not so used in any passage of the New Testament. The same phrase is used in the "*breaking bread* from house to house[1]" with the same meaning; so our Lord was known in "the *breaking of bread*[2]." And again it is used in the expression "the *bread that we break*[3]"; in all these passages it is the term for the Holy Communion.

κλάσαι ἄρτον.

"Paul discoursed"; probably he did not speak the whole time, but was interrupted by questions and conversations, point by point.

v. 8. "And there were many lights (lamps or torches) in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together."

The "upper chamber," the large upper room under the roof, commonly called the supper-room, which got the cooler air towards nightfall, in which people often gathered for the evening. This would be scarcely written by Luke without a thought of the upper room in which the Eucharist was first celebrated.

It was the first Sunday after Easter; we know what they talked of—the first appearance of Christ that Sunday evening, so short a time before.

v. 9. "And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead."

"The window" or pierced lattice-work of wood such as you see in Cairo, overhanging the street, leaning on a strong beam below. So that Eutychus sat over the street while the great preacher went on speaking. Eutychus—meaning

[1] Acts ii. 46 (R.V. "at home").
[2] Luke xxiv. 35.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 16.

"good fortune"—is a common slave name; what was said was doubtless above him, he was no Timothy; and the preacher went on too long for Eutychus, who was borne down with sleep and fell.

"Dead"; he was really dead, for a physician uses the word, and the words do not mean merely that he was taken 'for dead.'

v. 10. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him."

"Paul fell on him"; it reminds us of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, with the two youths, and no doubt those were in S. Paul's mind.

"His life is in him"; at that passionate prayer life was given back to one who had died so sadly in the hearing of the word of God; while Paul embraced him, God gave him the happiness of the assurance that his prayer was heard.

v. 11. "And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even until break of day, so he departed."

"Eaten," the Greek word means 'breakfasted[1],' after the distribution of the Eucharist.

v. 12. "And they brought the lad alive," now visibly come round, "and were not a little comforted."

vv. 13, 14. "But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene."

"Took him in." This is easily explained by a glance at the map. There was a great projection westward—a promontory many miles long, so that it was a short cut from Troas to Assos, a city in the bay. Paul went this way, so as to stay as long as possible while they sailed round.

v. 15. "And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios: and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus."

[1] γευσάμενος, literally 'tasted.'

Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Miletus,—to scholars like S. Paul and S. Luke all these names breathed legend and history of antient Greek religion and worship, but for most of the company they would rouse no more thought than the memories of the great things that have happened on the banks of the Forth do for most of us who go over the Forth Bridge.

v. 16. "For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."

Hurrying on to the Pentecost at Jerusalem. Vow still to be fulfilled. Vast assemblies.

"To be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost"; he had his vow still to fulfil, to offer the hair; but at Pentecost also he would be able to get a vast assembly at the most wonderful place for preaching the gospel. But there was a third reason also, Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. He had kept Easter at Philippi, the first place where he had preached in Europe six years before; now he hurries back to Jerusalem for the birthday of the Church.

Birthday of the Church.

The boy, dying in sound of the Word of Life. Alive at embrace of Life.

Let us turn back now; and first let me say a few words about Eutychus. Dying in the sound of the word of life; alive again at the embrace of life. A tender touch: 'at dawn of day they brought the boy alive,' as if his spirit then fully returned.

Living souls recovering dead souls.

At the present time, the only way of recovering dead souls, is by the touch of living souls; there is a wonderful power in souls who know they live by the life of God.

You must look for no magical strange influence in conjunction of affairs. People will pass through the most tragic affair, and be after, what they were before. They can only be made to live by the contact of a living soul. Pray God that you may have this grace of life, to make souls live.

Notice the suddenness with which this story of the slave lad, tumbling down with drowsiness, comes into the midst of S. Paul's great career. It touches us time after time, "In the midst of life we are in death"; he was in the midst of the most perfect young life.

But there is a more perfect meaning which Christ has given to this human thing which we are obliged to say. It

"In the midst of life we are in death," in Christ became "in the midst of Death we are in Life." Eutychus verified this.

is not this word, "in the midst of life we are in death," which you have written round the beautiful gift[1], placed, I believe, for ever, in this beloved home; it is indeed a gift, which, wherever it came from, would be prized not only by me, but by the bishops, my successors, as long as the English Church stands; a beautiful lasting memorial in this place of memorials; but it is to me infinitely more than it can be to any other because it is given by you from whom I have had more spiritual help than I can express, than I can ever know in this life, and in your kindness and tenderness you have been so loving as to make it a memorial of a most pure and steadfast life.

But you have inscribed it with a nobler variation, one that makes us realise the afternoon when first He appeared in the midst of His disciples; and what S. Paul says of the comfort wherewith he was comforted comes home to me; "in the midst of death we are in life."

This is the first thing to draw from to-day's reading, the endless, infinite, living lesson of death and life; that death is broken and expelled by a living soul, and the embrace of love, the great truth of which Eutychus himself is only a parable, for he lived to die again, the sign and symbol of endless life.

The Miracle "outcome of the kingdom of God" has a meaning here.

The Eucharist.

There is another thing I want to ask you to think of; the Eucharist[2], as it comes in this passage, is the most natural part of a Christian's life. Nothing is said of the great celebration, but it is so natural, as they gathered as Christians to listen, and to talk, they gathered also to break bread: "After they had gone up, and had broken bread."

Here seen as a natural part of Christian intercourse and devotion.

I must mention in passing two comparatively insignificant

[1] An eagle lectern had been given to the chapel by ladies of the congregation in memory of the Archbishop's daughter, Mary Eleanor Benson (d. Oct. 27, 1890). Cf. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. II. pp. 393, 395. Of this he wrote, "Your motto, '*In the midst of Death we are in Life*,' is truer than its true converse: for that is the great fact of this world's day, but this opens the Day of Eternity."

[2] Many of the allusions in the part which follows will not be fully understood without remembering that the Archbishop had given his judgment in the Lincoln case only two or three months before. Cf. *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. II. ch. VII. pp. 319 ff.

points, because there is often a question about them. Notice that this celebration is after midnight, before the dawn. Sometimes it is spoken of as an evening celebration, but it is not so, for the speech of S. Paul lasted until midnight, and the bread was not broken until after that, between midnight and dawn. S. Paul had already solemnly rebuked the Corinthians in his Epistle for making the Eucharist merely a common meal. He had ordered that it should never be so again, that they were to eat and drink at home, and come with reverence to the Lord's Supper; and speaking of the Lord's Table he says, they cannot eat of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. It is a simple but distinct solemnity.

(1) After midnight, before dawn.

(2) The "Lord's Table."

Then, we are sure what was the position used by the president of the Feast here, S. Paul; it is one used now by only a very few. The chief presbyter stood behind the table, looking at the congregation, whose eyes were turned towards him, and brake the bread in front of them.

The "position" at Table.

But the point which we want to dwell on is not this, but on the *One* Bread—that we are one with others, one with Jesus Christ. Breaking the bread is often interpreted, though there is no colour for such an interpretation, as symbolising the breaking of our Lord's body; this is not meant; for the sacrifice of His life, the blood poured out, is symbolised by the wine, but the breaking of the bread is intended to convey that there is one loaf, one bread, of which we are all partakers: "for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Cor. x. 17.)

(3) The One Bread.

Look at the passages which are concerned with this; it is quite clear they mean that all carried away a perfect portion of the One Bread—Christ. Therefore to be nearer to God we must be nearer to our neighbour, we must love God and our neighbour. S. John makes it plain that we cannot love God without loving our neighbour.

We can be "nearer to God" only if we are nearer to our neighbour.

Let us lay this to heart; if we find the Communion is not to us all that we desire it to be, if we feel dead, if we have examined our conscience, and dwelt upon it, and find we are not as near to God as we wish to be, the great question to ask ourselves is whether we are near our

How small our disputes look beside *that* renewed life.

neighbour, as we must be to be all partakers of one bread.

It will lead and enrich Earnestness with *any* strength. But earnestness so far as it goes is necessary.

What is the effect of the Holy Communion? To enrich us in earnestness, to lift us up, to give us any amount of strength; but earnestness, so far as it goes, is necessary, and we can be in earnest, we can come not indifferently; and then, in thought and feeling, we shall be made to live in Christ. But it is no use coming to Communion because it is the Church's rule, and a beautiful custom; this will not give us life and strength. To receive strength we must bring as much earnestness as we can. It is a common thing if people are not in earnest to urge them to come constantly and frequently to Holy Communion. Do not be satisfied if you can get them to do this; one cannot press it as an end, it is a great means. I cannot be satisfied with hearing that the number of communicants in a church has increased, as if that were an evident sign of life. It is a beautiful sign, it shews religious feeling, and proves that a desire to do religious duty has increased, but it is not an end. We must not be satisfied either with our dear ones coming, nor with the increase, as at present, of communicants in parish churches all over England.

I don't press it (1) as End, or (2) as means to what some think End.

Do not press every one to be a communicant because you think that they are in a fair state of mind, and that it will do them great good. Be sure that they will not be able to resist coming if they have the life of Christ kindled in them.

Do not press those who are not in earnest to come; to come does not make people earnest in religion; but you may be sure they will come if they first love God and Christ. It will not make those good who are not Christians in earnest. There are no mechanical means, in the kingdom of God, for anything. But those who are in earnest will be made much better and stronger. Being good Christians will bring them to the Holy Communion, and not to the Holy Communion only, but to Union with Christ, to a deep active love for mankind.

Coming to Communion cannot make indifferent Christians good.

But being good Christians will bring them to Communion and to growth in Holiness.

XLV.

April 22nd, 1891.

Journey to Jerusalem.

Acts xx. 17–38.

[Apr. 28, A.D. 57.] Miletus—Ap. 23, A.D. 58.

Pressing onward; reasons known and unknown.

Paul's agony at the prospect of the false Doctrines touching *them*:

I. Then the Doctrines *were* of moment: *e.g.* (21) Change of mind's attitude to God; Faith on Jesus Christ; (27) Gospel of the grace of God.

Our modern Faiths for the masses. 'Housing,' 'Sanitation.'—Do these change the hearts of the Rich? (35) Yet Paul lays a stress on them as products of Faith.

II. The 'Good news' we have to deliver is of certain Gifts and Powers, *e.g.* (28) God's purchase of the Church with "His own blood."—His making you 'heirs.'

(32) His power "to build you up."

III. If we are Christians we of course lay stress, the *same* stress, on the *same* things.—Do we?—for instance as regards Humility—"Tears"—Ambitions [for children]—Danger—Christ's maxim on Giving.

Pressing on to catch every boat, to be at Jerusalem by Whitsunday.

Coasting southward down the beautiful shores of Asia Minor with their islands, S. Paul is drawing near to Miletus, the port where he would land to reach the beloved Ephesus, that Ephesus which had so nearly cost him his life. Sailing past the lovely island of Samos they touch at Trogyllium and the next day come to Miletus. S. Paul was so anxious to get to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost that he could not

spare time to go so far from his boat as to visit Ephesus. No one seeing Miletus now would think it a sea-port, for the coast line has altered and the deposits of the river have filled up the fine estuary eight miles below where Miletus stood, so that Miletus is now eight miles inland. It is thought that in time the coast line will advance until the mainland is joined to the island of Samos. In S. Paul's day it was eight miles from Ephesus to the river's mouth, and eight miles more up the estuary to Miletus; the Ephesians might have time to hurry down and see S. Paul, though he would not have time to make the journey of 32 miles to Ephesus and back.

v. 17. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church."

vv. 18—38. "And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews: how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and

from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship."

What a powerful passage! If anyone thinks it possible that this is not a true description of the scene then there must have been two Shakesperes, so unrivalled is this story in its strength, tenderness and beauty. We thank God for it. From these words we can realise the Apostle's 'enwrapping love for men,' and his special affection for the Ephesians; and we can see how his mind is full of all that Christ had done and suffered, and that it is his very longing to tell others of this which is driving him on so fast to Jerusalem.

Feast of firstfruits.

We have seen to some extent why he was so anxious to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost. It was the day for the symbolic offering of the firstfruits; in the agricultural days of the nation it was the offering of thanksgiving for their harvest, the firstfruits of the yearly gift from God. Our Lord opened out the full meaning of the gift and the acknowledgement when He spoke of the fields "white already unto harvest[1]." Does the thought of an offering of firstfruits enter enough into our lives, do we not only pray for our needs, but give thanks for blessings received?

[1] Jo. iv. 35.

Feast of giving of Law.

Feast of Descent of Holy Spirit.

His vow.

Secondly, Pentecost commemorated the giving of the Old Law to Moses, in the flames of Sinai; and our Lord sanctioned and widened this thought by the gift of the New Law with the tongues of fire. This day was now the birth-day of the Christian Church, and all these associations of the day would make it for S. Paul the best day to pay his vow.

Reasons unknown—his own arrest.

And there was something in S. Paul impelling him; even in what seemed only the fulfilment of his own plans; he meant to go to Italy and Spain, but God's plan for him was larger and more awful. His own plan to go to Rome at least would be carried out, and in carrying out his own purpose he was drawn to Jerusalem where alone such a man as he would be arrested—as God had purposed; only his life was saved, that through his imprisonment and his trial at Rome the Light should spring up in the West. Thus God drew this man to the capital of the Roman Empire to speak for Him there.

False teachings of Galatia or Corinth were to be expected at Ephesus.

His agony at the thought of it.

At the time when S. Paul addressed the Ephesian elders he was suffering from a gnawing sorrow. He alludes to it in the Epistle to the Galatians and he puts it clearly to the Ephesian elders (*vv.* 29, 30), "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Among the Galatians as amongst the other Christian communities organized by S. Paul, the false teaching of the Judaizers had followed his own, and although at Ephesus the sky was still clear he was sure that the same clouds which had gathered at Corinth and in Galatia would gather and darken the pure atmosphere of Christianity at Ephesus. As we note the deep sorrow which is shewn in such words as "grievous wolves, not sparing the flock," "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," can we indulge the thought that the doctrines of the Church are of little importance? As we look closely into the state of things which existed then we shall see that the difference between true and false doctrine was more subtle than apparent; true and false doctrine ran on parallel lines and did not seem to the careless

Then doctrine was of moment.

hearer far removed; the difference was only to treat the Lord as enforcing, not fulfilling the law; to look up to Him as an example, and ignore Him as living and as teaching through the power of the Holy Ghost. Then there was nothing to prevent attendance on the Temple services; nothing to hinder the perpetuation of the isolation of the Jews as those privileged in the worship of God.

What did the Apostle oppose to this as the true teaching?

1. Repentance towards God (*v.* 21).
2. Faith on Jesus Christ for justification. (*v.* 21.)
3. The testimony, from experience, of the Gospel of the Grace of God (*v.* 24).

He had in mind the opposition which would arise to these principles, and the downfall of the hope of mankind; therefore he held firm his own witness to them, certifying himself as "pure from the blood of all men."

The *metanoia* to God.

What do these three points mean? Repentance is a change of mind, a change of the guiding principle, of the attitude of the mind towards God; as there is a pole towards which the compass points, so we may use our will to set the mind, as towards a pole, to self, the world, or God. We can either direct the mind towards being well with the world, mixing with its pleasures and pursuits; or let it face round to another point, pursuing and fixing the attention on self, so as to be protected even from the sacrifice which the world requires of us (yet there is no sacrifice greater than the sacrifice which self may demand); or we may set our will to live with a pure conscience toward God, to make His will our will, whether it is pleasant to us or not; to keep our mind fixed on Him, to let all life be centred in Him. But we must be sure that we do not fall into the subtle temptation of trying to serve self and God; of trying to live at peace with the world and with God; trying to wring, like Balaam, from God's words an apparent sanction of our service of the world or self. It must be, as S. Paul teaches, with an honest and true heart that we entreat God to dwell in us, for He will not save us against our own desire. When Balaam went his own way he could only speak as God bad him; yet God

let him go, to save him by teaching him the consequence of following his own will.

The Faith on Jesus Christ for justification.

The second point is Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. We must guard ourselves from letting our souls be satisfied with the mere historical view of the Perfect Life; as a life which was lived so many hundred years ago. In such a case we slip into the attitude of those Jews who could admire the life of Jesus without bringing the soul into contact with it; who taught that Jesus was a holy man, who would baptize in His Name, but who yet believed that the way of righteousness was by the Law and did not see that the Life was the fulfilment of the Law, and of all the ritual of the Temple; and that the Law and the ritual was the preparation for their acceptance of the Life. They believed that righteousness lay in absolute compliance with every particle of the Law. "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess"; and the ritual was to them the outward token of their exclusive privilege in the worship of God: in this worship they lost God and found themselves only, losing the faith of which S. Paul wrote in the Epistle to the Romans. The soul must be fixed on the will of God, on the study of the Lord Himself, the soul must be united to the Christ who gave Himself for it; His rule in the heart will produce the good works which God desires; from love for His Son true obedience will flow, and continual struggle against sin in the endeavour to make the life an imitation of Christ's life. The life of the servant of God is ordered by God, when he acknowledges his dependence on God.

Picture in imagination the humility with which the Publican ascended the marble steps of the temple, the lowly attitude, and humble prayer; here you see self merged in adoration, faith present rather than effort. In the attitude of the Pharisee there was splendid and consistent effort, but effort had been put forward as acceptable in itself, in exclusion of the humble faith of the Publican he denounced; and thus the spiritual sense was blinded; thus it was the Publican who left the temple justified, rather than the other. The Publican was a partaker in justification; for this term in the science of

religion means the realization of union with our Lord Jesus Christ through the forgiveness of sins.

The Gospel of the Grace of God.

The third point of S. Paul's teaching was "the Gospel of the Grace of God"; the good news proclaimed to man, that God loves the world and all the souls in it *in spite of* sin; that His Heart is so eternally great that He can love them still and gave His only Begotten Son to die for their sins and to rise again for their justification; the teaching of mercy is summed up by S. Paul (Ro. v. 8) that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; and by S. John (iii. 16) that "He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish." Though human hearts are marred by sin yet they were made in His Image, and our Father sees His own Image in us; enough of Him is still in us to make us capable of this mystery of mysteries, capable of receiving the spiritual communication of Himself, the Spirit of God in our hearts, whom He will give to them that ask.

We must beware of speaking of the Holy Spirit as "It." This is at variance with our Lord's teaching, for He says of the Comforter whom the world cannot receive that "He abideth with you"; that "He shall teach you all things" (John xiv. 17, 26); that "He shall bear witness of me" (xv. 26); that "I will send Him unto you," and when He is come He "will convict the world" (xvi. 7, 8); that "He shall glorify me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (xvi. 14).

In these three points of teaching we have the essence of Christian truth; from these by sound and just deduction are drawn the secondary truths, important as they are, which complete the faith of the Christian Church; our prayers, our liturgies, our sacraments are the working out of these three great things; but we must guard ourselves from taking any of the secondary truths as independent sources of faith and practice.

We are busy with Faith in Voting; a Gospel of Drainage and Housing.

But what is the Faith and the Gospel which we are trying now to bring to the poor. We accustom ourselves to say that it is impossible to win the masses to Christianity until we can secure for them due provision for sanitation, for educa-

tion, for recreation. There has never been a time when men have been working more to help the poor than now, yet this principle is false. It is difficult to over-rate the sufferings of the poor or the responsibility as Christians of those who are able to help them; but due provision for sanitation, for housing, will not give them strength to resist evil. Do the most beautiful houses and the costliest entertainments change the hearts of the rich? They have all these in perfection and profusion; are they mentally and morally the better for it? We are not mistaken in upholding the duty of improving the physical condition of the poor. The care of the poor is the fruit of the Gospel; but they will first appreciate truly the work of philanthropy when the deeper part of the nature has been touched and the eyes uplifted to the truth of Christianity.

Do these change the hearts of the rich?

God knows and Paul teaches we ought to do that and not leave the other undone.

v. 35. "In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"The weak"; the word in the Greek of that period means 'those who are feeble through poverty'; the word for "labouring" implies 'hard labour'; to "help" means literally to 'lay hold upon,' returning the grasp of a friend's hand; the poor who cannot help themselves grasp at a hand; we ought to grasp them back when they grasp us, with a grasp as strong and full of feeling as their own. May God help us to do this somehow.

ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων. Specially the poor who can't help themselves.

But that is not all we have to do.

But this is not all we have to do; we have a Gospel to deliver—a Gospel of certain gifts and powers.

We have an *Εὐαγγέλιον* to deliver about certain Gifts and Powers.

v. 28. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood."

The "overseers" or "bishops," were previously spoken of as elders; and their duty is to feed the flock of the blood-purchased Church; purchased with the blood of Him whose institution it is; the Blood shed was the human Blood of Him who was God; thus it is the Blood of God with which

Church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

the Church was purchased; how else could the Church be purchased, for the blood of man could not purchase it? What safety then for the Church is in the arms in which it lay cradled. S. Paul enforced every injunction as to the social and spiritual duties of the Corinthians with the solemn charge, "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; cf. vii. 23). "The Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood": these are sacramental words.

Sacramental words.

Argument to people of honour.

v. 32. "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

The sorrow which marks S. Paul's utterances gives place to the gladness which is born of confidence as he dwells on the certainty of the fulfilment of God's promise of victory to His own.

We all know the sense of heart despair in the conflict with sin; how twelvemonth after twelvemonth passes and we have made so little way. The foundation was laid so long ago; is the Temple of God being built, are its walls any higher than they were?

He is "able to build you up" by the "word of His Grace."

Able to build you up.

He is able to help even those who, like the Ephesians then, like us now, felt doubtful, unable to respond to God's work within them, ready to despair of His will being worked out in them. Who, that would serve God, is a stranger to this fear? We keep on falling back; we can trace certain besetting sins back to our childhood; some seen and reproved by others; some known only to ourselves. We ask ourselves 'How shall I be able to give up my spirit at the last, when I do not know if I have received the Spirit; when I know that I have grieved and provoked Him?'

It is not possible to earn this inheritance; but He is able to give you the inheritance among them that are made holy. *They* were *made holy*; God is able to make me holy also.

Able to give inheritance ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν.

These were the three truths, and the three powers or gifts which S. Paul preached, and the Ephesian elders received; it is our duty as it was theirs to take them to others. Repent-

Three doctrines.

ance towards God; faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; the witness to the Gospel of Grace. And the three gifts are, The purchase of the Church by His own Blood; He is able to build up; He is able to give the inheritance amongst those that are made holy.

Three gifts.

If he and we are Christians we lay stress on the same things on which he laid stress—and do we?

If we are Christians as S. Paul was we must not only believe on the same truths, and on the same things that he believed, but we must put on them the same stress that he did and attach to them the same importance. And do we?

But then we also shall lay the *same* stress on the same things—do we? e.g. *νουθετεῖν* to give people sense.

"By the space of three years," he says, "I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears." To "warn" or "admonish" means to give good sense; the same words are used of the scribe who asked our Lord "which is the first commandment?"—Jesus saw that he answered "discreetly" or "with good sense" (Mk. xii. 34). Good sense is indispensable to true religion.

With *ταπεινοφροσύνη*.

Again in *v.* 19 S. Paul declares that his service was with "all lowliness of mind." Humility is a virtue well known for the difficulty of its acquisition; S. Augustine calls it a "troublesome" virtue, because it is wont to elude the seeker at the moment in which he becomes in conscious possession of it. Yet it is a virtue which every Christian must strive after, for pride is destructive to worship.

With Tears—again with Tears.

And again S. Paul speaks of how he served God and admonished them "with tears" (*vv.* 19, 31). This was no weakness, for his heart, not his mind only, was in his work. Bishop Andrewes thanks God for "the gift of tears."

Ambition nil of gold, silver, apparel.

In *v.* 33 S. Paul appeals to the well-known singleness of his motives; he had no ambition to acquire gold or silver, apparel or the splendour of the luxurious Eastern houses. How is it with us? If we have no such ambition for ourselves do we desire such things for those we love? Do parents before a daughter's marriage comfort themselves in thinking, "She may not be happy, but she will be rich; she is so good that she will do much good with money; she will have such wide influence in the position which this marriage will open to her, and she will accept the difficulties of her position." Do parents willingly give a son to God to live the life of a

Is this what you choose for daughters?

suffering Apostle? or do they say: "the Church was such a good career when family livings were worth more; it is a pity they have declined, and the clergy are not drawn from the same class now." And why is this so, except because this class is not educated in such a way that they will take orders now? You complain of a change in the clergy; you cause it. So it is concluded that the sons are 'safer' in business, and they may be sent to the other side of the world to make money.

Is this what you choose for sons? Do you give them up and bring them up for Christ?

This ambition for his "children" did not touch S. Paul, when he sought their spiritual welfare "with tears"; danger to himself did not touch him, but the danger of false teachers for his disciples.

Dangers not taken into account. Only to go God's way.

You will notice the difference of reading in the Revised Version, cf. *v.* 24, "that I may accomplish my course," not "finish my course *with joy*" as the Authorised Version has it. The true reading is significant; to 'accomplish the course' is the blessed hope of the Christian, but the end Paul left to God. He longed to finish the course God gave him in His way and in His time, but the 'joy' he left to God.

Even μετὰ χαρᾶς was not his thought.

There is a society in another Church called the Buona Morte, whose end is to secure a happy death. What a difference there is between those who seek this object, and the soul whose aim is simply the will of God; who desires that He will hold our hand, that we may seek His will; that He will teach us how to die in Him.

XLVI.

May 6th, 1891.

Journey to Jerusalem.

Acts xx. 25; xxi. 1–14.

S. Paul thought never to be in Ephesus again—but see 1 Tim. iii. 14; iv. 13.

Knew suffering to be before him; and before them a fall. 2 Tim. i. 15.

That fall not final. Rev. iii. 2–5. S. John's residence.

Then note what Inspiration did and did not convey.

Voyage continued. Cos, Rhodes, Patara; change vessels. Cyprus sighted.

Tyre ('*the* disciples found' and parted with). Change again. Acre.

At Caesarea:—(1) The Two Evangelists. (2) The Four "Virgins." (3) The Prophet.

S. Paul's 'going up' against all convictions of others.

The danger growing more and more definite from Miletus to Tyre and to Caesarea, that he might be a perfect Free-will victim—'deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'

The free use made, rightly or wrongly, of inspired knowledge. Spiritual Inspiration was higher than intellectual Inspiration, and still is ours.

It is not clear to us why some matters were revealed to S. Paul, and others, of apparently the same importance, were concealed from him. What was it that inspiration did, and did not, convey to him? What therefore may we hope that inspiration will shew to us[1]?

[1] Cf. pp. 353 ff.

In the collect before the Communion Service, and in the collects for the ninth Sunday after Trinity and the fifth Sunday after Easter, we pray for guidance by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Cleanse the *thoughts* of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit"; "Grant...the spirit to *think* and do always such things as be rightful"; "Grant... that by Thy holy inspiration we may *think* those things that be good, and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same." Thus we pray for inspiration of thought, as well as guidance of action.

S. Paul's mind when he landed at Miletus may be compared to a wide stretch of country, illuminated except where the light was obscured by dark masses of cloud, so that some parts stand out light against a dark background. He fully believed himself to be parting for the last time with those friends who had come down from Ephesus to see him; as he says in his tender, devoted farewell; "I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more"; for this reason he makes the solemn asseveration that he is "pure from the blood of all men," and accepts their sorrow "for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more." Paul had formed his own plan: after leaving Jerusalem he intended to go to Italy and on to Spain. Let us see what did happen.

S. Paul never expected to be in Ephesus again—but he was. See 1 Tim. iii. 14, iv. 13.

His purpose was to visit Jerusalem, Italy, Spain.

It appears possible that Timothy did not go forward with him, but was left in charge at Ephesus[1], where S. Paul wrote to him later (1 Tim. i. 3), "as I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia." From all the information that we get it appears that Timothy was at one time in the position of Bishop at Ephesus, and at the time when the first Epistle was written S. Paul is evidently soon hoping to visit him there (1 Tim. iii. 14), "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly"; and again (iv. 13), "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching." These later plans of S. Paul seem to

[1] More probably later; cf. Armitage Robinson, ap. *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, pp. 361 f., and *S. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 350 f. Cf. pp. 365, 595.

have been fulfilled, for it appears probable that he was in prison at Ephesus after his second arrest; if he was arrested the second time in Jerusalem he would very likely pass Ephesus on his journey to Rome, as it would lie on the way. There is a reference in the Second Epistle to Timothy (i. 15) to the dissension between himself and certain Ephesian Christians, "all that are in Asia"; and as Phygelus and Hermogenes are named this again seems to imply personal intercourse with Ephesus; and the mention, directly afterwards, of "Onesiphorus" (*vv.* 16–18) and his house seems to shew that S. Paul had dealings with him at Ephesus, as well as subsequently at Rome. "In how many things he ministered at Ephesus thou knowest very well."

Then inspiration does not consist in knowing such details. But he did know (1) that the Holy Spirit witnesseth that bonds await him, (2) the coming in of wolves.

S. Paul's return to Ephesus then was hidden from him, but two things were revealed to him by the Holy Spirit,—a double sorrow—that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him; and that "grievous wolves" should enter in, "not sparing the flock." In spite of his devotion, his zeal and his teaching these would enter in, "and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." The two men mentioned to Timothy were probably among these. It is with this sorrow in his heart that S. Paul looks on the group gathered round him at Miletus; some will teach perverse things, some will be devoured. "When...we were parted from them," the next chapter continues (xxi. 1). It was a sad parting: no attachment to a teacher, even an Apostle, can be a safeguard in itself; the attachment to the Lord is alone safe. There was revealed to the Apostle the fall of those purest in word and thought, the rising up of evil among even the group now surrounding him and devoted to him. They did fall (2 Tim. i. 15), and yet his labour and his warning were not in vain. If you look on to the Revelation of S. John, to the letter written at the dictation of the Lord to the "Angel of the Church of Ephesus," you will see the mention of their works, and toil and patience, "and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves Apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; and thou...didst

So this beautiful, touching, perfect scene was an awful sorrow,

and they did fall away.

Yet the falling was not permanent. His labour not vain.

bear for my Name's sake" (Rev. ii. 2, 3). So that the warning to "take heed...to all the flock," to "feed the church of God" was not in vain.

But the falling had come; if but one has gone wrong the high spirit of the Church is lowered; "thou didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. ii. 4, 5). 'Return and live as you did when S. Paul was with you' "or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place" (*v.* 5).

xxi. *vv.* 1–3. "And when it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: and having found a ship crossing over unto Phoenicia, we went aboard, and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden."

After the parting they came with a straight course to Cos, an island always famous for its wine[1]; thence to Rhodes, where there still stood the lower part of the legs of the Colossus, a bronze statue of the most perfect proportions, which had stood 100 feet high, striding across the harbour.

At Patara, where was an oracle of Apollo, they had to make a hurried change to a vessel sailing to Phoenicia, to secure a quick passage, for fear that any change of weather should hinder them from reaching Jerusalem by Pentecost (probably May 17th). Then they passed Cyprus and landed at Tyre, the glorious capital of commerce where the vessel would unlade.

[May 28th, A.D. 57.]

v. 4. "And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem."

"Found *the* disciples," probably Paul's own.

Notice that "the disciples" are spoken of. What disciples are these? When S. Paul first left Jerusalem after

[1] There is a modern proverb, *οἶνον ἐς Κῶ*, 'to take wine to Cos.' Cf. "Take coals to Newcastle."

his conversion to go to Tarsus he journeyed by the Syrian coast (Acts ix. 30; Gal. i. 21). His passage would lie through Tyre, and it is very possible that these disciples were converted by him in those early days. He stayed among them seven days, and they, full of the Holy Ghost, also witnessed by the Spirit that bonds and imprisonment awaited him.

vv. 5, 6. "And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again."

Their petition to him not to go on. The parting on the shore like Cornish fishers.

How natural this scene is: "the Church" in Tyre, men with their wives and children, follow the Apostle and his company to the beach, and before the ship sails they all kneel down together on the shingle and pray; and the fathers, mothers and children, return to their homes in the city. You may see such a scene as this to-day in the fishing villages of Cornwall, at S. Just, and elsewhere; the wives and children come down with the fishermen to the shore before the boats go out, and the minister offers prayer with the villagers kneeling on the shore, before the men embark. There is a fitness in the simplicity of such surroundings which appears to some to be essential to such devotion; but it does not need sand and shingle to kneel on that friends may pray acceptably about their troubles and farewells;—the thick carpet of a drawing-room will do; civilisation is no necessary bar to holiness, which may be as natural in a great lady as in a fisherman.

The new boat touched at Ptolemais, Accho, or S. Jean d'Acre, whose old name still prevails, and is always associated in our minds with the "lion heart" of Richard I.; above it rose Mount Carmel: and from here they came to Caesarea the Roman seat of government for the province of Syria. From Caesarea there would be a caravan of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem at Pentecost.

vv. 7, 8. "And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren,

and abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him."

Philip the Evangelist, his influence all over there.

Philip and Paul had probably not met since the stoning of Stephen; then Philip may have stood in the circle surrounding the victim, and the brilliant young student, who, in his full manhood and strength, keeping the cloaks of those who were killing Stephen, must have seemed as anti-Christ to Philip. Now Philip sees an aged and broken man, who has borne and suffered much for his Lord's sake, and is ready himself to lay down his life at Jerusalem.

Meeting with him of Luke the Evangelist.

Here too Luke the Evangelist and Philip the Evangelist meet. From Philip Luke could learn, and it is probable did now learn, the history, which he relates in the first chapters of the Acts, and which he could not have known at first hand[1].

v. 4. "Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."

Four daughters 'virgins,' an 'order.'

Philip's daughters, whose work was prophecy, stand at the head of one of the groups of women workers, who have adorned the Christian Church; they belonged to the army of the virgins, and are the first of the band. A parallel order of widows is mentioned (1 Tim. v. 9) and S. Paul has rules for each order. The widows were not admitted under 60 years of age; and the qualifications of admission are given (1 Tim. v. 9, 10). The virgins had more leisure to devote themselves to the work of the Lord; for the widows had household duties, and sometimes the care of children, since mothers were not to be refused.

Parallel order of widows.

The virgins —their spiritual life.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians S. Paul acknowledges the service of the virgins, by comparing it to the service of matrons, weighted, in those early troubled days with serious responsibilities. He sees, with his unaided judgment as he tells us, special capacities for service in the unmarried, both men and women (1 Cor. vii. 8, 26, 34). Yet he is conscious of the dangers of this view and has no "com-

[1] Cf. pp. 239, 279.

mandment" concerning virgins (vii. 25); and he even desired that "the younger widows[1] marry," 1 Tim. v. 14; he is at pains to shew that there is rather distinction than difference in their service, the service of the unmarried being the most direct.

Many others have followed Philip's daughters; about two hundred years later the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian[2] shew the existence of virgins as a distinct order, living in their own homes. Difficulties had arisen; there were troublesome discussions of their dress, their place in church, and other matters, some of them trifling, in the decision of which, however, a calm judgment was needed. It is a sad picture of the attractiveness of externals in religion.

This state of things was gradually replaced by the gathering of the virgins into convents; but the restrictions of convent life did not keep Satan out; he made wild work there and many still see only the evil and danger of convent life; while others seeing the power of it seek the revival of such communities in the Sisterhoods of the present time. We should pray that if this revival does take place God will make us wise through past experience, and that the love of power may not enter into the work for Him.

Agabus. His previous prophecy. Old prophetic form.

vv. 10, 11. "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

This is not the first time we have heard of Agabus. He foretold a famine which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar (Acts xi. 28). The symbolic action of Agabus in taking Paul's girdle to bind his own hands and feet, reminds us of the signs of the Old Testament prophets; like the marred girdle made "profitable for nothing" by Jeremiah (xiii. 1—10) to shew the marring of the pride of the Jews, and their destruction. You will remember how the false prophet

[1] R.V. marginal reading "women."

[2] *Cyprian*, by Archbishop Benson, p. 51.

Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah used such a sign, making him "horns of iron" to shew how the kings of Israel and Judah should "push" the Syrians and destroy them (1 Kings xxii. 11), and Ezekiel so forecasts the siege of Jerusalem by the use of mimic instruments (Ezek. iv.).

"Shall deliver him into the hands of Gentiles" like Jesus' self.

By his sign and words of aweful import Agabus foretold for S. Paul a fate which seemed to be that of his Master as described beforehand in His own words: "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles[1]"; words which seemed to point to that which was the highest aspiration of S. Paul—to "fill up...that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh"...(Col. i. 24).

Paul's ἀποθανεῖν perhaps shews that he realized this possible inference from παραδώσουσιν εἰς χεῖρας ἐθνῶν.

Picture this scene, Philip with his four daughters, Paul, Luke, Agabus standing in the midst, taking Paul's girdle, with an action that seems to us almost grotesque, and following this with the words, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews...bind the man that owneth this girdle...." The words struck such terror into this company that even the holy family of Philip joined the other disciples in entreating Paul to stay his course; but all that their entreaty drew from S. Paul was the expression of his readiness "not to be bound only, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

vv. 12–14. "And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

That he should die in Jerusalem was an unrealized expectation, founded on the outline of truth revealed. The Holy Spirit is building Paul up, shewing him what shall happen to him, but hiding from him when and where; and the declaration which the prophecy brings forth stills all opposition to that which was now accepted as the "will of the Lord."

[1] Cf. Matt. xx. 19, Mk. x. 33, Lu. xviii. 32, 33.

Paul was moving on to Jerusalem under a brooding sense of evil to come.

Bound in spirit.

This incident is very important and touches us closely, as shewing what inspiration did and what it did not teach. Watch closely, and you can almost feel the spiritual pressure of which the Apostle was conscious, and realize why he describes himself as going "bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem." He was hasting to be there at Pentecost, yet all the while under a brooding sense of evil, sorrow and pain, spiritual warnings of the evil to come among his disciples, and of the sorrows and pains that were waiting for himself:—*bound in the spirit,* led on, longing to go on, though a black cloud was gathering threateningly round him; and through it all the brave high heart was seen like the sun at evening breaking out from behind the blackest cloud in dazzling light: we are appalled by the clouds, but the strength is the sun's; the storm must burst, the clouds must break and disappear that the sun's light may be seen again unchanged: and the blackest clouds are black on one side only, on the other they may be brilliant reflections of His Light.

At Tyre more definite,

at Caesarea more definite still.

Agabus. Christ sent him that Paul might be perfectly aware.

As S. Paul drew nearer to his goal the warnings were repeated like the tolling of a bell; at Tyre they were more definite, for the residents knew of the feeling in Jerusalem. And Paul's friends did not make it easier for him; so clear a sense of danger fell on the company at Caesarea that even the trusted companions, "we," as well as "they of that place," Luke and Titus[1], as well as Philip and the disciples, beg him to desist from his purpose. When the book of the Acts was written God's will in the matter had been worked out, but Luke cannot forbear confessing that he too had tried to interfere with the working. This only deepened Paul's suffering: "What do ye, weeping and breaking mine heart? I know the things that await me." He seems to be struggling with those who are trying to keep him back. If this story had been left to us to write should we not have dwelt much on S. Paul's depression, his apprehension of coming evil, the heart-breaking sorrow by which he was surrounded?

There are some whose experience makes them familiar

[1] It is assumed that Titus, who is never mentioned in the Acts, was still with him. Cf. pp. 496 f. and references.

with sorrow, until the struggle against it seems altogether vain, and unhappiness becomes a commonplace, a settled, accepted habit, and death appears to be the only deliverance from a spoilt life. The heart takes each day as it comes, puts up with the coldness of someone of whom it had far other hopes; with the partings where no tears are in the eyes, with the meetings which bring no joy, in spite of momentary hopes that have no fulfilment; all life seems clouded with the sense of unhappiness now and of evil to come. But the things which produce this unhappiness in us are comparatively so small; there is hardly an analogy even between our case and S. Paul's; yet even so we may take this lesson from his example:—to remember that we walk through darkness into light; that the sun is only veiled, not annihilated.

In S. Paul's mind the choice was made, and no return was possible; death, as he thought, awaited him in Jerusalem, but he was ready "not to be bound only, but also to die." He went forward giving his best, even himself, to God.

In the oldest days of heathenism the same custom in sacrifice always prevailed that we find in the law of Leviticus; it was the same in Egypt[1] and in Italy; all that was sacrificed must be perfect of its kind, the bones and hoofs perfect, even the tongue without spot, there must be no blemish.

ἀφετός καὶ ἑκούσιος. The noble victim.

And another custom prevailed in some of the old heathen worships—the victim must go of its own accord to the altar. An old marble represents an ox drawing the priests to the altar; in some representations the victim precedes the priest without cords attached. Later, when priesthood degenerated into priestcraft and sacrifices became means for acquiring wealth, undoubtedly tricks were resorted to in order to attract the victim to the altar, while giving it the appearance of freedom; but the very deceits bear witness to the existence of the noble idea, whose expression they simulate, of the willingness of the victim.

So S. Paul was ready to go, to die for the name of the Lord, and moved willingly towards Jerusalem.

Thus all alike were ready to make free use of the

[1] Herodotus, II. 38.

All alike felt free to make use of the Holy Spirit's information.

revelation given by the Holy Spirit; but all, S. Luke as well, concluded, and not unnaturally, that Paul must not go on. S. Paul's inference was otherwise—'Then I *must* go—to be bound, or—to die, at Jerusalem." Then they fall back on that which in all experience is the only sure happiness—'we surrender our wills,' "the will of the Lord be done."

They all—Luke too—inferred "Do not go," naturally. Paul inferred "I must and will."

They fell back on τὸ θέλημα.

(1) They had minds, mental vision, illuminated by the revealed facts.

(2) Paul had spirit illuminated, enkindled to draw spiritual inference as to duty.

Thus while their mental vision was illuminated by the revealed facts, their reason erred, their inference was wrong; but the spirit of S. Paul was illuminated and enkindled to draw the true spiritual inference as to the direction in which his duty lay; thus his gift was higher than theirs. We do not say indeed that they had not inspiration of spirit as well as of mental vision, but here it was overpowered and confused by love of Paul.

The latter was much higher. We have not (1), but we have (2).

We have not received the illumination of our minds in the knowledge of future events; but we have received the gift of the Spirit to do the will of God. We might by an extension of our own observation, or that of others, enjoy the knowledge of what will be happening in 1900, or 1920, and yet be quite uninfluenced by the Spirit which can teach us to "think and do always the things which be rightful."

The spirit of S. Paul's companions was overshadowed by sorrow, but they were forgiven; so shall we too be forgiven, if we seek to bind up our will with "the will of the Lord," and learn to draw strength from the very fact that our mistaken inference is over-ruled.

We have received not the spirit of δειλία—cowardice, 'but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.'

The "spirit of fear" is not from God; but from Him is the spirit of love; the spirit of power, which endures; the spirit of a sound mind, which enables us to judge rightly, to discern between good and evil, bitter and sweet, light and darkness. There are many reasons for being afraid, but they are not of God; we must not yield to the spirit of fear. Let us set before our minds, S. Paul on his way to Jerusalem; let us use the Spirit given us by God which will work in us so quietly, so unpretentiously, so unerringly.

We can use it, so quietly, so straightforwardly, so unerringly.

XLVII.

July 15th, 1891.

Last Days in the Holy City.

Acts xxi. 15–33.

The glad reception; happy ingenuity to avoid suspicion and avert the prediction; a week's Retreat in such a place.

All overthrown in an hour. The ferocity of the attack (compare Inscription).

Moderation; its rewards, now and after.

Spirit of Jewish ritual departed; what the Church would have been if the Holy City had remained its centre until the nations were Christian. The true Jerusalem preserved (Rev. xi. 1, 2).

Harmless or harmful conformity. The question will always remain for the Christian Conscience. Obedience to Conscience vital, but assisted by the Holy Spirit both as to judgment and power.

Since we last met sorrow and loss have touched the homes of many of us; the strong have been made powerless; the tender hand of God has touched us with a sense of weakness, or the pain of loss[1]. Has this time strengthened our hope? It should make us the more fit to dwell on these last days of S. Paul in Jerusalem; as he pressed on bringing the alms of the Churches to Jerusalem, where he would re-dedicate himself—a willing victim. So the little company arrived at Jerusalem.

Last days in the Holy City.

vv. 15—17. "And after these days we took up our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us

Glad reception unlike expectation.

[1] The influenza epidemic of 1891.

also certain of the disciples from Caesarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly."

It was a warm welcome; S. Luke was with him.

vv. 18, 19. "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry."

Notice the state of affairs in the Church; before the "Apostles and elders" received S. Paul, now the Apostles are scattered, preaching the Gospel, and James, the Bishop, only remains with the elders or priests, all of whom are present when the little company come in to tell "one by one" the things that God had wrought among the Gentiles. S. Paul had a special mission also, namely to bring alms for the poor Christian population who had been turned out of the temple, and deprived of their means of living. There was no difference of opinion among the elders, they were all of one mind with S. James and ready to welcome Paul, and when they hear his account they are filled with the spirit of thanksgiving, and of peace and gladness.

v. 20. "And they, when they heard it, glorified God." Then came the proposal which shewed they knew what had been foretold concerning Paul. "And they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law...."

"Thousands" is "tens of thousands," "myriads." They had gathered together from all parts for the feast at Jerusalem.

"Zealous for the law" should rather be "Zealots," a fierce, fanatical sect, bound to die, rather than to let the Gentiles profane the temple, or enter within the balustrade that shut it off. It was the zeal of the Zealots that caused the final destruction of Jerusalem, for in the Roman siege they made so determined a resistance that it was necessary for the Romans almost to destroy the temple in order to get possession of the town.

vv. 21, 22. "And they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? they will certainly hear that thou art come."

All knew of S. Paul's opposition to the circumcision of Gentile converts; but he did not, as the Zealots said, teach the Jews not to circumcise their children. Timothy, being a Jew on the mother's side, was circumcised, but not Titus, who was a Greek. The elders, fearing the anger of the people devised a method by which Paul should at once keep quiet and shew that he, as a Jew, kept the law.

Happy device to avert all suspicion and the prediction of Agabus. "Man proposes."

vv. 23, 24. "Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law."

To understand the whole of this incident and what follows it is necessary to know something of the plan of the temple. The first court was the Court of the Gentiles; the second, the Court of the Women. These names did not indicate that the Courts were set apart for the Gentiles and the women, but that Gentiles might not advance further than the first, nor the women further than the second. In a corner of the second court was a room set apart, and inhabited by day, not by night, by those under the Nazarite vow, so that they should be at hand to offer their daily sacrifices. It was considered an act of piety for a rich man to pay for poor men the expenses of their purifications and offerings, and to join with them for seven days, keeping the same retirement, observing the same abstinences, and shaving the hair with them. Herod Agrippa the Elder had ingratiated himself with the Jews by doing this[1].

There was then a happy ingenuity about the scheme proposed. Paul had already taken the Nazarite vow and shaved

[1] Jos. *Ant.* XIX. 6. 1; cf. *Bell. Jud.* II. 15. 1.

his head at Cenchreae; after this shaving thirty days had to elapse during which the hair grew again, and seven days of this time still remained. The elders advise Paul to join himself to four poor men who had taken the same vow; to pay their costs for them, and finish their time with them. They would all live in the room set apart in the second court of the temple. At the end of the week the custom would be fulfilled of going to the priest, and offering the hair and a burnt sacrifice. This would be a clear and convincing proof that Paul did not despise the law or contemn the customs; and the priest would be the witness.

The Council added that they were quite of the same opinion as S. Paul about the restrictions laid on Gentile converts; but this course would put everything right in the eyes of the Zealots.

v. 25. "But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication."

It is interesting to remember that James was a life-long Nazarite, never drinking wine[1].

A week's retreat in such sanctities for one who could interpret all.

Could anything be more beautiful than this reception of S. Paul, the approval of the work done, the suggestion that he should make this holy retreat; and picture what the week would be to him, in these sanctities; from the Nazarites' room he could hear the services of the temple and join in them; hear, through the day, the Levites' chanting of the psalms of David; through the wide temple gates he could see the morning and evening sacrifice, the Seven Lights burning, the table of the Shewbread—knowing that these things were but types and shadows, the Incense, the Lamps, the Light, the Sacrifices, and that already all was fulfilled in Christ, the true Lamb; while he meditated on the passing away of all these things, and the revealing to all eyes of the true Lamb, which had been offered, the true sacrifice accomplished, the true High Priest who had fulfilled in Himself the whole law and offered His own Blood within the veil. Who shall say that

[1] Hegesippus in Eus. *Hist. Eccles.* II. 23; cf. p. 349.

it was not the meditations of these days which are expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, not these sights which inspired S. Paul, when he himself wrote in the Epistle to the Romans "What advantage then hath the Jew?...much every way[1]"; "whose is the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the service[2]"? While these glorious sights were passing he saw beyond them greater beauty and glory, recognising the Inner Power which takes them all up and absorbs them in Himself.

v. 26. "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them."

So he entered into the Retreat. How safe the place seemed! S. Paul accepted the plan, but it was not to him a way of escape, for he would not accept the warnings which would have turned him back from Jerusalem, though he yielded now to the tender solicitude of his friends.

All overthrown in an hour. "God disposes."

So man proposes, and so God disposes, for in one hour the clever plan is overthrown just as the seven days are drawing to their close.

v. 27–29. "And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple."

You will remember that 'Asia' here means the little square province, of which Ephesus was the centre[3]. These Jews, who would know all the chief people in Ephesus, seeing S. Paul walking in an interval of the Retreat with Trophimus the Ephesian, jumped to the conclusion that he had taken Trophimus with him into the temple, and stated, as a fact, that he had done so. How natural the narrative is, the recognition, the hasty conclusion; and how entire is the

[1] Ro. iii. 1. [2] Ro. ix. 4. [3] cf. p. 373.

assurance such an incident gives that this is history, not fiction; and the rest of the narrative is not less graphic. The crime was so great that (*v.* 30) "all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut."

To understand this we must refer again to the structure of the temple. The Court of the Women was square, enclosed by a wall, in which was a great door leading into the rest of the temple, and, on the southern side, a door leading into the Court of the Gentiles. Josephus[1] mentions that on the four sides of this court against the supports from which the arches sprung were four obelisks, each bearing the same inscription, to the effect that no man of alien birth might pass beyond the balustrade on pain of death. The Romans respected the religion of their subject countries, and if a law so clear and unmistakeable were infringed the Roman soldiers would assist in the execution of the penalty.

Ferocity of attack. Josephus's account; the δρύφακτος.

In 1871 a distinguished French explorer, M. Clermont Ganneau, excavating in the Via Dolorosa at Jerusalem, found the corner of a slab sticking out of the ground and uncovering it found in Greek type the words "Let no stranger enter within this balustrade on pain of death[2]." This was undoubtedly one of the four slabs mentioned by Josephus. It is interesting to see how science and discovery continually reveal new points which illustrate and confirm this history.

M. Clermont Ganneau's discovery.

The Jews were within their rights, supposing their surmise had been true, in dragging out S. Paul; if they could they would have stoned him. So fierce was the tumult that to prevent further pollution the Levites at once cleared the court and shut the four doors of the temple, even the "Beautiful" Gate on the east, of two bronze leaves, 60 feet high, which it took twenty men to shut, and which stood open daily from dawn till the first three stars appeared[3].

The Riot.

[1] *Ant.* XV. 11. 5.

[2] *Revue Archéologique*, new series, Vol. XXIII. pp. 214 f., 290 f.

[3] Cf. Jos. *Bell. Jud.* VI. 5. 3: and for signal of night, Talmud, *Sabbath*, 35 *b*. The gate opened either into the Forecourt of the Women or the Forecourt of the Laymen. Cf. Büchler, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. XI. p. 46.

vv. 31–33. "And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done." The Rescue.

How was this all accomplished so quickly? If our soldiers were called out from the Wellington Barracks they could not so instantly seize and bind a prisoner. But the heavy pack which a Roman soldier carried on his back, contained an axe and adze for cutting wood, a chain, handcuffs and a thong—Virgil calls it the "unfair pack[1]." When S. Paul is to be examined by scourging later, he is bound with "the thongs[2]." Further, the castle or fortress of Antonia was just above the temple, commanding it and the town, and a large force of Roman soldiers was kept there to quell the religious disturbances of the Jews, where now to our shame Turkish soldiery are stationed to keep the peace between Christians. From the castle a flight of steps led down to the roof of the temple cloisters which ran north and south, where S. Peter had healed the impotent man; and the soldiers running over this roof would come to a second flight of steps leading down to the temple; from here the whole city was at once at their command.

The chief captain, or Chiliarch, was over 1000 men; the centurions had each a hundred men under them.

And so we must leave Paul, chained, in the hands of the Roman soldiers, facing an angry, raging mob.

But what are we to learn from all this of the spirit of S. Paul?

The Hebrews thought that none but Hebrews were called of God; and even the Hebrew Christians for the most part thought that Christianity belonged to the Hebrews, and that

[1] Virgil, *Georg.* III. 347—8. "Non secus ac patriis acer Romanus in armis Iniusto sub fasce viam cum carpit."

[2] Acts xxii. 25.

to become Christians the Gentiles must virtually become Hebrews. S. Paul's contention was that to allow Gentiles only to become Christians through the rites of Judaism was to deny the "free access" to Christ, and to bring them into bondage. Thus S. Paul had Timothy circumcised, but withheld Titus: but even with Timothy the force of the rite was changed: it was now a national rite, an inheritance, admissible for Jews, but no more a seal of unique sanctity and salvation. So too Paul himself would keep a national rite like the Nazarite's vow. Here as elsewhere his moderation was misunderstood. An "idol is nothing," because there is but one God; but a feast in the idol's temple is "fellowship with demons[1]," you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Paul teaches that the gospel of Jesus makes men free from the bondage of the law, "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free...for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus[2]"; yet when the man who violated marriage laws made this liberty an occasion for license, see how severe a course S. Paul dictates[3]: and although he himself kept the Nazarite vow he rebuked S. Peter for 'compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews[4].'

Moderation so incomprehensible; anybody can be extreme.

Moderation has its "reward" now, and its "reward" hereafter.

Do these differences appear irreconcileable, and does S. Paul seem to be a time-server? Some modern German critics have come to the conclusion that the writer of the Epistle to the Galatians cannot be the S. Paul of the Acts; yet it is these very differences in action which prove the underlying unity of principle. These shew in him the moderation which is so incomprehensible; the love which seeks to make concessions, so far as they can be made; which while holding central truths is strong and free to make the adaptations which are expedient. It was not vacillation which made him say "to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews;...to them that are without law, as without law...that I might gain them that are without law[5]."

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 4–7, x. 19, 20.
[2] Gal. iii. 28. [3] 1 Cor. v. 1—8. [4] Gal. ii. 14.
[5] 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21. Cf. *Sermons preached on special occasions*, by J. B. Lightfoot, iv. 57.

The concessions of cowardice, the facility of indifference, are quite different from the elasticity that springs out of the desire to bring home the same fundamental truths to different natures; though there is a superficial resemblance between the versatility of worldliness and the versatility of love.

It is the elasticity which comes from sympathy that we are bound to try to gain, and to exercise in our daily life.

What the Church would have been if the Holy City had remained the centre.

The true Jerusalem preserved.

"Rome" soon became protest against it, and after that, itself a Jerusalem.

There were 'myriads' of Zealots in the Holy City, but a power rose up which was to deliver the Church from the 'Zealot' spirit, that Christianity might not come to the world in the bonds of Jewish formalism[1]. When the centre of the Church was transferred to Rome, the civil centre of the Empire, Rome was at first a protest against this spirit; but Rome itself became again a Jerusalem, bringing her children into worse bondage than that from which she had freed them; so that it is impossible not to see in the Roman Church signs of the spirit represented by the woman, in the Revelation, who in the midst of images of glory and beauty is found (ch. xvii.) sunk in her shame[2].

Harmless and Harmful Conformity.

We are perpetually called upon to judge between harmful and harmless conformity; the grand stand which the Quakers made for purity and truth in life, dwindles down in the use of "thou," in the refusal to uncover the head, to a protest against conformities altogether harmless. The protest against the Adoration of the Elements at Mass may be exaggerated into a protest against kneeling, as our Prayer Book orders, to receive the Bread and Wine at the Holy Communion.

There is a conformity to the usages of the world which is harmless, yet the spirit of the world is in perpetual conflict with the duty of the Christian.

The question will always remain for the Christian conscience.

God does not prescribe for us particular actions, He leaves these for ever to the Christian conscience, and obedience to conscience is vital for ever.

[1] Cf. *The Apocalypse, a Study*, marginal note, p. 82, on Rev. xi. 2.

[2] The report is not here very clear, and the reader is referred to *The Apocalypse*, ch. i., of the Persons, and *in loc.*

Obedience to conscience is vital,

but assisted by the Holy Spirit both as to judgment and power.

How then may we judge rightly? We are not alone; God has given us His Holy Spirit, to assist conscience in decision, and the will in strength. We have not received from Him the spirit of fear, but the spirit of love to sympathise, of power to act, of a sound mind to judge rightly in soberness. That spirit is able to build us up.

XLVIII.

Ash Wednesday, 1892.

Jerusalem, the Leaders and the People.

Acts xxi. 33–xxii. 16.

Beginning Lent. The "few simple rules which are above none of us and which none of us are above."

Jerusalem, official and popular. Agrippa. Antonius Claudius Felix. Ananias. Claudius Lysias. The excitement. The Easter outbreak. The riot and supposed capture of May 23, A.D. 58.

[A.D. 57]

S. Paul's dignity and courage: His statement of the Origin of Christianity: His personal evidence. What personal evidence tells.

v. 16. How to begin a new life. How to do so, if long ago baptized.

v. 14. God's Preparation of us through unlikely courses.

Duties of this season are realities.

Searching Devotions. Rational Abstinence. Proportionate Alms.

I want to bring before you the real principles which we may gather out of the history of the Acts; if we look below the surface of the words we shall see the real teaching as to how we are to live our lives in this world, penitentially, but always rejoicing. At the end I will sum up these principles.

We are again at the beginning of Lent and I want to remind you that it is quite possible and very improving to discipline ourselves during Lent in a way free from all superstition and hypocrisy, with warmth and generosity of heart.

Ash Wednesday and Lent. The few plain rules which are above none of us, and

which none of us are above.

What gives reality to Lenten discipline is that very generosity and warmth. We cannot keep Lent with observances; we cannot keep Lent without observances.

How did particular observances grow up? Fasting was a natural discipline for people in very hot countries; Christians did not in this differentiate themselves from Jews and heathens; but it was a discipline especially natural for Christians, in the remembrance of our Lord's fast; and the severity of fasting increased. It is impossible in a northern climate to do quite the same; but when Christianity spread to other countries, Christians who were in earnest felt that a month or more before the time when our Lord's Resurrection is commemorated, they ought to give more time to thinking over their sins, their hopes as clouded by their sins. As they felt they must rejoice in the Lord's Resurrection, so they knew they must do battle with, and overcome whatever made their spirits low, took away their rejoicing and clouded their hope.

These things are as clear to us as they were to the antient Christians. Therefore the true keeping of Lent is an inward thing. In the English Church we do not say that people must do this or that outward thing, but we say that they must use real thought and prayer, exercising as privately as they may such self-denial as has a bearing on inward things that each knows of in himself; yet not as if they were ashamed of such self-denial, but in such a way as to be a help to others. There are things natural to Lent: such as to deny ourselves in food, to give attention to almsgiving, to give more time to sincere devotions, and to public services; to go to churches for private prayer. All such customs were in the beginning natural, and grew up round pious people who found them useful to themselves and told others of them. But after two or three generations people began to look upon such customs as having in themselves power to make them earnest: this is not so; we must begin by being earnest, and use such observances as come naturally to us.

We left S. Paul last time, chained, in the midst of the mob. A blind fury possessed the populace, a race which was

in all places remarkable for the intensity of its popular excitements. Here we get a slight glimpse of the fashionable society of Jerusalem—a place dreaded by the Romans on account of the outbursts of frenzy of the people, yet a favourite place of residence; Jerusalem was always full of Romans; the governor there kept a brilliant court, his palace surpassed in beauty even the temple itself; and there was also the little court of the northern king Agrippa, which had been kept up since his horrible death. Some persons of this society were now to come in contact with the life and decide the future of this great Apostle, himself almost a mendicant in appearance, and bearing "the marks of the Lord Jesus," the traces of that terrible list of sufferings which we read of in the Epistle for Sexagesima Sunday[1].

Who are these persons?

Herod Agrippa II.

The palace of Herod Agrippa close below the temple was usually uninhabited but still beautifully kept up. Agrippa II., King of Chalcis, lived at Rome; before his father's death the Emperor insisted on having him at Rome; and kept him in his own palace, where he was brought up as a ward of the Emperor's and became the favourite of Claudius; it was too dangerous to have a young Jewish prince loose in Jerusalem, until he had been brought up at Rome and imbued with Roman ideas; for they feared a revolt of the province. This prince was no ordinary person; the Jewish historian calls him "that most wonderful man[2]"; he was accomplished in every accomplishment of the time, and had an extraordinary knowledge of Jewish law, learning which would have done credit to the Rabbis; S. Paul himself bears witness to this, "thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews" (xxvi. 3). But no man was more profligate. Brought up in the midst of profligacy he had two sisters who were considered the most beautiful women in Rome; and they had the same character as he himself; we come across one of them before long.

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 19 ff.

[2] *θαυμαστιώτατος*, Jos. *c. Apion.* I. 9.

Antonius Claudius Felix.

The second man who is shortly to be brought in contact with S. Paul is Felix. When the late king died and the young prince went to be a ward at Rome, the government at Jerusalem was kept up by sending there an officer of almost absolute power, called the Procurator, who lived in great splendour in the palace. There had been three procurators, two of whom were extremely cruel, hated and despised the Jews, stayed at Jerusalem only to oppress them, and lived as much as they could at the heathen capital, Caesarea. Their cruelty and their idolatry of the things most offensive to the Jewish religion had caused an outbreak of the Jews. Felix, coming as governor over an exasperated populace, at first was prudent, but when he found he had got a hold on the people he began the same career of treachery and assassination.

Felix was one of those wonderful people whom one finds here and there throughout history. He was slave-born; he and his brother were Greeks, and had been purchased by the Emperor's mother. He was accomplished, subtle, winning in manner and address; he knew the weak points of the people round him; he devised ways of performing whatever was desired by the Emperor, whether it were bad or good. His brother was what we should call Controller of the Household or Maire du Palais, but combined with it the office of Prime Minister; he humoured the whims of the man on whom hung the fate of a great Empire, and at last turned on him and abetted his murder. This brother, Pallas, had taken the opportunity of doing great benefits to the Jews, in return for which he procured the appointment of his brother Felix as procurator. Felix is one of those extraordinary people who, though risen from the lowest origin, appear side by side with the greatest aristocracy, having passed through every rank; and by his extreme subtlety he knew all around him and was feared by all. He was profligate to the last degree; he had succeeded in winning the affections of Drusilla, one of Agrippa's sisters; he induced her to leave her husband and to live with him at Jerusalem. You see what was the state of society; for when his own sister was living with Felix,

Agrippa made no scruple of visiting and holding intercourse with him. The historian Tacitus branded many people, but one of the most terrible epigrams he ever wrote was on Felix: "jus regium servili ingenio exercuit[1]." 'He had all the power and rights of a king and used them in the spirit of a slave.' Tacitus meant that the determination to do what one will is not the spirit of a king but of a slave; and that thus Felix lived, with all the city and the world at his feet, exercising the power and right of a king, but in the spirit of a slave.

Ananias.

The third person of immense importance was the Jewish high priest. He was recognised by the Romans as a great prince; the Romans set him up and put him down, but while he was high priest he reigned. The present high priest, Ananias, was a Pharisee, a great man of the world, and very oppressive; he seized tithes due to his own priests, many of whom thus deprived of subsistence died of starvation[2].

Ananus.

There would be present also one who belonged to the high priest's family, and was high priest himself for a time, Ananus, or Annas, a Sadducee. The Sadducees were sceptical; they held to no part of Scripture but the Pentateuch; they believed in no Resurrection, in no spirit nor angel, in no inspired person except Moses; Ananus, like all the Sadducees, was almost sceptical, very unspiritual; yet he was a high, strong, honourable character; with such wisdom and forethought that the historian[3] says "if Ananus had lived Jerusalem would never have been destroyed."

It was these four men, Felix, Agrippa, Ananias, and Ananus the noble Sadducee, into whose presence S. Paul was coming. Though he had taken every precaution to escape notice, he was suddenly hunted out to confront ruin; he behaved as nobly as he always did; and his future life was decided by these four.

Claudius Lysias.

Then we come across, besides these four, Claudius Lysias,

[1] Tac. *Hist.* v. 9; *Ann.* XII. 54.
[2] Jos. *Bell. Jud.* XX. 8. 8.
[3] Jos. *Bell. Jud.* IV. 5. 2.

the tribune and lieutenant of Felix, who, in his absence, exercised his power; he is called "the chief captain of the band" (*v.* 31). Claudius Lysias was a time-serving man, stupid, but kind when it served his turn; not truthful, but with a certain force of character. He had adopted the name Claudius in honour of the Emperor.

vv. 33–36. "Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him."

He was "borne of the soldiers" for chained as he was he could not walk fast enough to escape the mob.

v. 37. "And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee?" Paul's question startled the chief captain, "and he said, Dost thou know Greek?

v. 38. "Art thou not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?"

This was Whitsuntide, in the year 58 A.D. In the Easter [A.D. 57] of this same year there had been one of those outbreaks which sprang from, at the same time that it stimulated, the exasperation of the Jews. Josephus gives us the account of it[1]. A man had appeared, a Jew born in Egypt, who had proclaimed himself as the Messiah—one of the false Christs, whom Christ had said would come; and he had said he was going to do what the people had wanted Christ to do—to restore again the kingdom to Israel: he was one of the "Sicarii" whom Felix himself had used when convenient. He had collected 4000 men, and marched into the "wilderness": others had joined him from villages and he returned

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xx. 8. 6; cf. *Bell. Jud.* II. 13, 5.

with his force swollen to 30,000 and appeared before Jerusalem. The Roman troops went out against him with their cavalry and with many of the citizens who took their part; they came into collision on the Mount of Olives and routed the Egyptian and his men; four hundred were slain and many taken; but after the massacre that followed, the Egyptian could not be found; and everyone thought he was lurking somewhere in Jerusalem. Now at Pentecost, [A.D. 57] May 23rd, 58 A.D., the fifth day of Paul's purification, comes the riot caused by the Ephesian Jews; and the chief captain naturally thinks that now he has got hold of the Egyptian.

v. 39. "But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people."

"A citizen of no mean city"; mark the dignity with which S. Paul speaks: mark his courage too, "give me leave to speak to the people"; there was no moment when he would not speak a word for his Master.

v. 40. "And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language."

Not for the least moment does he lack courage; "Brethren and fathers" he begins—

xxii. *vv.* 1, 2. "Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you. And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet."

Then he told them how he himself had been convinced that Christ was true; he tells them of his kinship, his education; he gives the highest praise to a Jew's ear when saying that he was "zealous for God," he adds "as ye all are to-day." "I was zealous," immediately he has his auditors' sympathy: as he had been doing his best to serve God as they were now he has a right to say how he differs from them, to tell them how conviction came to him and how it might come to any of them. He failed to convince them, but his argument

was not wasted, as it has convinced men ever since. The conversion of S. Paul is one central fact to reason from. No one has ever said that S. Paul was not penetrated with conviction; no one has ever said he was untruthful; no one has been able to deny that he believed it to be a fact that Jesus Christ revealed Himself to him, that Jesus Christ who had been gone all these years spoke to him.

vv. 2–16. "And he saith, I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest

thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name."

Notice the exceeding aptness and cleverness of S. Paul's address. Point by point he brings out that he was a Jew, that he loved the Jews, the temple, his own people. "I am a Jew"; 'Gamaliel' (whom they all knew) 'was my tutor'; 'Jerusalem was my headquarters.' Ananias he mentions as honoured by the Jews (*v.* 12). 'I was going back to Jerusalem,' and prayed "in the temple" (*v.* 17). His argument is as usual exact to the point; Christianity had not swept Judaism away, but was the true outcome, the flower of it. It was not worth while when he was speaking to the heathen to say this, but it was everything to the Jews.

(1) Courage and coolness.

We must not think little of the courage and dignity that Paul exhibited; it is what Jesus Christ expects of us.

(2) Effect of personal evidence, backed by evident sincerity and courage.

Then secondly there is the absolute historic certainty that a man who was to be trusted did think that in calm daylight he had spoken with Jesus Christ. That evidence goes further than any I know; the evidence that you can bear will go as far. If you say to those you love, that you know Jesus Christ, that He has spoken to you—as He has; that personal evidence will go farther than all books you may put into their hands, further than all arguments; and that personal evidence stands on exactly the same footing as S. Paul's.

How beautifully S. Paul repeats what Ananias said to him, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." And in that very hour I looked upon him and he said, "The God of our fathers hath appointed" or "*prepared* thee[1]."

(3) Prepared thee to see The Just One.

"Prepared" him, and how? Not by merely striking him down, by blinding him; it was not preparation, but accomplishment, when he saw "The Righteous One" as the Jews called the Messiah.

Preparation through such strange things.

"Prepared,"—was he being prepared all the time when he had been studying in Gamaliel's school; when he had been at the University of Tarsus learning Greek? Was he being prepared all the time when he was hunting the Christians

[1] προεχειρίσατο, "made ready to hand," or, as used of a person, "to appoint."

down and getting letters from the high priest?—hunting them down, putting chains on them, dragging them to Jerusalem, getting them condemned, standing by with folded arms and cold eyes to see Stephen die, while the clothes of those that stoned him were lying at his feet. Was he being prepared all that time? Yes, all that time 'He prepared thee to know His will and see that Righteous One.' How all this teems with hope when we think that all the while Paul was wandering on his wild way, clear that his mission was to destroy Christ's name, and to blot out His mission, the Father was preparing him. Is not this hopeful? If we are wandering ever so far from the God of our salvation and turn to Him now, we shall know we have been going through a preparation. Nothing in our own past life makes witness to Christ impossible; when we have turned we can use all for Him—even our old temptations, for if we verily and indeed repent He will give us strength and power to deal with those that have been tempted in the same way; to say to them, "I know your temptation, in your place perhaps I should have done the same, but I have been prepared, and tell you that this sin may be washed away in the blood of Christ." And we can use for Him not only the sense of definite sins done, but the sense that whole sections of our life were under the control of some master sentiment which was wrong. When we look back on our past lives, we begin to feel that they are not so satisfactory, but that all in them is hypocritical because in some way we deliberately went against our conscience and our God. We went on being religious, and treated the evils into which a ruling passion led our hearts as if they were exceptional. As we get further away from such a time the thing gets more dreadful to our conscience; that which while it was going on seemed to cast a golden light over the prospect, and lent it a kind of beauty and romance, now towards evening we begin to see was a false light, an illusion, a light not of heaven, and it has faded now, or it is threatening or fiery. And we cannot help thinking "there may be something else in me now like that; how shall I know if there is? After death, in that other condition

of being, shall I preserve the consciousness of it? Shall I have to look back on my whole life with this dark thread running through it? Shall I say that all my life through when I have been teaching, praying, I must have been hypocritical because I have been contradicting my own conscience? My life has all been centred on that passion or feeling; that was the dominant chord, all else was grouped round it?"

Such a state of mind is more dreadful, more dangerous, more to be repented of than any *act* of sin—though it were one to avoid which Christ says we ought to cut off the right hand. There may have been no excuse for some act of which we were guilty, and yet we may not have been in it so alien from God as in the quiet years in which we were outwardly living to God, but inwardly cherishing and not tearing away this dreadful dark thread through our life. Do we know ourselves? Can we see if there is any root of bitterness in us now; will we try if, in these forty days, we can tear it out?

What power we should have with others when we could say, "I feel with you, but you must get rid of this root of bitterness, and you can"; when we can tell them that Jesus Christ is ready to save. That is where S. Paul's power lay. Yet the life of S. Paul in his anti-Christian moments was not like ours; even in a bad cause he was a "zealot of God"; he says that though he fought against God with all his power he believed that he was right in this opposition. But when we see our lives marked through and through with some subtle sin we cannot say we did it out of zeal, we must say, "it was a contradiction to all I knew." All the more will you be able to say a great word for God, if you say, "I conquered this subtle sin—yet not I but Christ in me."

Here is the time to begin, the holy season. Give a thought to fasting; remember the usage of Christ's Apostles when He was taken away, but do not fall into the dreadful hypocrisy, which has become a systematised abuse in some Churches, and among some religious people, of simply following traditional views, choosing between meats, taking one, avoiding another,

while giving way to indulgence under colour of fasting. There are three main lines to observe, three realities on which to base our discipline.

1. Searching Devotions.

1. It is possible to make one's devotions more perfect; to use those authors, those prayers, which are of the finest character, to use more careful self-examination; to worship more in company with others.

2. Rational Abstinence.

2. With this we may practise abstinence, when it is based on real devotion.

3. Proportionate Alms.

3. We must give proportionate alms. But there is no human being who can tell you in detail what to do; each one of us must think out in what measure such observances are most helpful to ourselves. Whatever we suffer from in others, unjust thoughts, impatiences, whatever wrongs, whatever sorrows, let us take care that no one suffers from in us. Try to bring yourselves to bear in convincing someone else of the power you trust in; let us bring every trouble and trial of our lifetime before God, and ask Him to let it work that effect in our character for which we are certain He sent it in love.

XLIX.

March 9th, 1892.

Last Days in Jerusalem.

Acts xxii. 17–xxiii. 11.

22. Crime of converting Heathen: aggression on Divine aristocracy.

Roman rule. Sanhedrin and its members.

S. Paul's spirited treatment of three crises: his Roman rights: the High Priest's unfairness: dividing the Council.

(9 omit 'let us not fight against God.')

xxiii. 11. Another sight of Christ.

'Our preparation through unlikely courses,' until the moment of higher knowledge or wakened conscience.

'How to make a fresh start'; especially when well thought of—"*whited*."

Change like S. Paul's not to be expected; because his course had been conscientious. Our recovery must answer to our decline, which began in repetition of unconscientious acts. We must set Will to work on points which are clear. The Judgment is clouded in great things, if it has been overridden in lesser things. And the Will will not act in great crises if kept weak by perpetual small disobedience.

Judgment and Will can be recovered by obedience in things clear. "Be of good cheer."

His courage and dignity.

You remember the strange position in which we left S. Paul; dragged by the soldiers, a howling mob behind him; you remember the fire and spirit with which he begged to be

His defence: Christianity the fruit of [the Jews'] own religion.

allowed to speak; telling the Jews that Christianity was the perfect flower and fruit of their own revelation, the complete work which would go on through the ages; that he himself had never loved their religion more; that he had never loved them more than now; that as they were now zealous for God, so he also had been zealous for God, fully persuaded, in his own mind, of the rightness of his hostility, and of the duty of dealing out death to those who followed Christ; Caiaphas was in some ways his model; Caiaphas had "judged it expedient that one man should die for the people"; S. Paul had judged that those who loved Christ should die that "the people" might be saved. Yet through all this time of bitter opposition he was being prepared for that to which he was now called.

He had been "prepared" through unlikely courses.

Thus Paul says his life had passed up to a certain moment, when he had heard Christ speak, and that later he had seen Him and heard Him speak again when he had been praying in the temple. Thus he shews them that he was not going to destroy his old religion, but fulfil it like Christ Himself. The plant had blossomed; this old religion of his youth had been first the blade, now was the ear, the full corn in the ear. If these people were likely to be touched by any argument, they were likely to be touched by this: "I was doing what you are doing; I worked harder in the cause than any of you; but Christ spoke to me, Christ sent me. What could I do but go?"

He had seen Christ, and been sent by Him.

The next verses contain what seems a singular argument. He says, 'I came back to the beloved Jerusalem, I prayed in the holy temple, and fell into a trance and saw again, or rather saw now Him whom I had heard before saying "Make haste".'

vv. 17–20. "And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood

of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him."

Is not this a beautiful modest remonstrance of a man on his knees with Christ? Christ says, 'Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem—this dear Jerusalem—for they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me.' What does S. Paul's answer mean? It is most natural; 'Lord, I should have thought they would, may I not try? are they not likely to listen to me when they know with what earnestness I was on their side? may I not stay and try? My own people will not receive my testimony? Surely they will listen; they know I was a persecutor, even a murderer of Stephen. If they listen to anyone would they not to me?'

v. 21. "And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles."

"To the Gentiles!" they had listened patiently to the argument, for it struck them; but when it came to so manifestly ridiculous a fiction as this, that Paul said he was told by God to preach to *the Gentiles*, then they knew that he was a deceiver who would sacrifice anything to this fancy.

vv. 22, 23. "And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air"—

To teach Gentiles deserved death more than taking them through the Δρύφακτος.

We can hardly conceive how great a crime it seemed to them. They knew that through everything they were the chosen people of God: they had rebelled, and they were scourged, first by the captivity, now by the oppression of the Romans. This only riveted upon them more and more certainly the assurance that they were God's aristocracy of the world, called to be close to Him with the truths and teaching that came from heaven. That very spot of ground was chosen for them by God, with all the associations with Hezekiah, with the return from captivity, Nehemiah and Ezra. But when S. Paul then tells them what he calls *facts*; that the

Gentiles are to be anything but humble proselytes, that they are to be in the kingdom of God, they find that what he calls *facts* contradict their very principle.

I spoke of the marble fence with its obelisks on which was written that no Gentile might tread the courts within; a principle so rooted that the Romans sanctioned this Jewish law and allowed them to put the trespasser unsparingly to death; so that the assertion that the Gentiles then might be justified without the law seemed a crime of the same nature as this trespass but much more awful, as being in spirit the sin against that very principle which was typified in outward things by this wall of division; to bring into the spiritual kingdom those who were necessarily outside was the same crime spiritualised, and by so much the more deserving of death. S. Paul was upsetting history, nature, God's ordering of nature; he was annulling the divine prerogative of the divine aristocracy of mankind. "He was not fit to live" was a plain truth to them. "They cast dust"; there were no stones to throw, but in a sign and parable they shewed what they intended to do and would do as soon as they could.

Aggression on Divine aristocracy.

vv. 24, 25. "The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The military Roman.

Here we are brought face to face with what we must accept as absolute truth, though it has entirely disappeared among us. It makes us feel we may still have principles and customs which in later times may be entirely swept away with the same astonishment. This method of proceeding was absolutely accepted; if they wanted to know the truth they must get it out with torture; a man must be scourged until he told, and until those who examined him were quite satisfied that he was telling the truth. Such examination by scourging was what this tender, loving person

had hanging over him. S. Paul is quite silent and lets all the preparations be made. When he is tied with the thongs, lifted almost off his feet, with arms stretched above his head, the Roman scourging would begin with the horrible instruments they used. He let it all go on, he let himself be tied, then the quiet man said as the centurion stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

S. Paul's silence till the moment.

Lawful! it was a matter of death. Anyone who scourged a Roman citizen must by Roman law be put to death; magistrates of the greatest rank had been deposed and exiled because they had scourged a Roman citizen. If anyone had received the honour of Roman citizenship no one might touch him; the only thing that was lawful was to have a manacle or thong on his wrist fastened to the wrist of a soldier. A Roman citizen could not suffer worse imprisonment than being put into the house of a magistrate who would be responsible for producing him.

vv. 26–28. "And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain, and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am a Roman born. They then which were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."

"A great sum"; the payment of a large sum of money would enable people to obtain this citizenship; sometimes it was conferred for services done, but those were Roman citizens in the fullest sense and with the utmost dignity who were free-born.

Presently we are going to read the letter that Claudius Lysias wrote and we shall see from the false statements he made, how terrified he was about having strapped and made preparations for flogging S. Paul.

v. 30. "But on the morrow, desiring to know the cer- Next day's Sanhedrin.

tainty, wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them."

These little touches bring us face to face here with a most remarkable point. This man, a Roman officer, who had bought his freedom, was in such entire control of the city and people that he commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together. The Sanhedrin, originally consisting of 70 elders, was the great national council; many of the priestly class belonged to it, highly educated, refined people of great descent. So sacred was the council, that originally they used to meet in a room of the temple, but for some forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem the Sanhedrin had ceased to sit in this place, for at this time the Romans had begun to exercise control over their meetings, and it is probable that they were not allowed to meet within the enclosure where it would be unlawful for a Roman officer to be present. The gathering of the Sanhedrin must have looked like Holman Hunt's picture of "Christ in the Temple," which shews the doctors sitting round with the decorations of the priesthood. Annas was certainly alive, and possibly Caiaphas also. Gamaliel had died but had left two sons of rising influence: they would be there, for the council contained all the chief people of religious or civil authority in Jerusalem, some scribes, very learned in the law, some Pharisees, some Sadducees: I have spoken of their various different tenets: often in the council no doubt they would have to act together, but here there was evidently no room even for question among them, for they all thought that the man who had brought the great secret truths of God to the Gentiles was worthy of death. They were not able to get at the truth in the way they wished by scourging the prisoner, so the captain summons the council, takes the prisoner there and sits in dignity in the council room to hear the discussion. Mark the mixture of pride and humiliation to which the Jews are subject. They must meet at the order of the officer, and when he is not satisfied at the conclusion they are coming to he takes the prisoner away.

The council begins, S. Paul taking it as his business to speak. Notice the dignity with which he asserts his right to be amongst them[1].

xxiii. *v.* 1. "And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day."

The Jews had been sure that it was not true that he was ordered by God to speak to the Gentiles, so he begins by saying that he has lived before God in all good conscience. Then the high priest broke out. Remember his relations to Caiaphas, Annas, Theophilus, the judge of Stephen, all of whom had taken a prominent part in the repression of the new false sect.

v. 2. "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth."

Ananias. Instant illegal barbarity.

Smiting a prisoner on his defence was an unspeakable offence.

v. 3. "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

At the destruction of Jerusalem the high priest hid himself in a sewer; he was dragged out by the Roman soldiers and murdered by them at the mouth of the sewer[2]. One wonders if "God shall smite thee" came back to him on that day.

"Whited wall." Ananias and the rest could hardly have forgotten that this was the very word that Christ used in the expression "whited sepulchres"—the word means the lime-dust or white-wash which they used in perpetually rewhitening the sepulchres. Christ had said that their inner wickedness, while they boasted and gloried in their righteousness, made them like tombs rewhitened. Then there was a strange scene.

Paul's tremendous reply. τοῖχε κεκονιαμένε, allusion to Jesus' word.

v. 4. "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?"

They said, 'This man professes to be teaching a religion

[1] *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. II. p. 150, note 47; cf. p. 611.

[2] Jos. *Bell. Jud.* II. 17. 9.

which comes out of the glory and beauty of our religion, and he reviles God's high priest.'

His apology for it.

v. 5. "And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people."

There are many explanations of this; it has been thought that it was a rebuke, for the judge had just committed such an offence that S. Paul did not know he could be God's high priest: or that it contained a hidden declaration of the truth that he was not God's high priest, for the office of high priest had come to an end, and the only high priest was at God's right hand. There is beauty about either explanation; but both seem far-fetched; it is better to understand that S. Paul simply meant he did not know that Ananias was high priest. Some accounts tell us that the high priest always wore white; but others that the high priest was not distinguished by his dress when he appeared in the Sanhedrin in order that his personality should not have too great weight, so that he wore in presiding an ordinary priest's dress. Thus his speech would mean, 'What I have spoken to a judge so unjust I would not have said if I had known that he was high priest.' Here then is a strange position; the high priest has received at the beginning of the defence a rebuke

His policy.

of the fiercest kind. Notice then the ability with which S. Paul puts an end to the whole discussion. Half the council were Pharisees, half Sadducees. S. Paul declares himself at once to be a Pharisee. Humanly speaking one would say he was proud of it. The Pharisees believed firmly in the Resurrection of all men; the Sadducees believed neither in angel nor spirit. So in a moment S. Paul divided the council; the Pharisees were ready at any rate for the time to take his part, urging "What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?"

vv. 6–9. "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension

between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamour: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?"

There the true reading breaks off. Copiers of the manuscript in antient times have put in the words about "fighting against God," taking them from Gamaliel's words of another time. But how much more forcible it is without them, as most antient manuscripts have it: "what if an angel or a spirit hath spoken to him?" Then the assembly breaks up, there is no chance of coming to a conclusion.

v. 10. "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle." Military rescue.

Before we go on let us mark the great intellectual ability of S. Paul, that we may appreciate the kind of man who did this work for us. He is a match for everyone, he is so completely on the spot, with such spirit; I know no witness who has given one such an opinion of his ability. To the Romans he maintains perfect silence until the moment when they are going to lay on the lash, and then his question, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman?" upsets the chief captain's plans. The high priest's violence is upset by the tremendous speech, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Then he looks on the council and by a single stroke sets half against half; there is great ability in this movement. People may say, "Wasn't his first answer rather proud, and his second answer rather fierce, and the third rather subtle?" I am not quite sure that S. Paul did not think so himself, for he says in his next speech that he has nothing to blame himself for "except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day[1]." S. Paul himself thinks it was

Ability.

The three answers,

to Roman,

to High Priest,

to Council.

[1] xxiv. 21 and cf. p. 585.

rather too subtle, and I cannot go any further; I do not think the question is "was he angelic?" he was a great man and perfectly human: if, in the intense excitement of that afternoon and morning, he shewed something like pride to the Roman, and something like fierceness to the high priest, and something like subtlety in the way he disposed of the council, he was a real man; and he says he does not count himself to have attained, "but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God[1]." And whether there were failings or not in his action in this, at night Christ stood by him.

The Night.

v. 11. "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

That is our Master. If in zeal for His service, if in love for Him, if in indignation against wickedness, His servant had failed, Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ, He takes all, He forgives all, and binds His servant closer to Himself, "Be of good cheer." He doesn't promise any letting off, peace and comfort for the rest of his life, but the heart of the Lord is in that "Be of good cheer"; Paul shall accomplish all that it is in his heart to accomplish.

The visit of Christ.

What He promises.

Let us lay that to heart: God has great faults to find, yet if we are striving on, He forgives.

Our preparation through unlikely courses.

Then I want to turn to what we left unfinished. We came to this point: we are taught that God was preparing S. Paul all the time through the most unlikely courses; the preparation was going on up to the time when his conscience awoke and he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" and heard, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Thus when we too look back on our lives tainted in so many ways, so imperfect at the best, so dreadful at the worst, we may still trust that He has prepared us up to the moment when the higher knowledge breaks in upon us.

Until the moment of higher knowledge or awakened conscience.

[1] Phil. iii. 13, 14.

State more dangerous than acts.

I said this and more: that more dangerous than sinful acts is that state in which sin is soaking through and through the character; when one's peace is not disturbed by it but the life is soaked through by some false principle. If a crash comes, and some definite commandment is broken, it may not be so dreadful in God's sight as the peaceful years when we were doing the service of God, but contentedly letting some evil thought pass into our minds and have possession of us.

How to make fresh start.

"If such a thing as that is in my life how shall I know it? I must know it, but how?" S. Paul had this chance given him and he said, "What wilt thou have me do?" and the answer came. S. Paul had new light again with his baptism, but it cannot be so with us, for we have been baptised already, we have had the washing away of sins, we cannot be baptised again; we promised, or friends have promised it for us, that we would repent and believe, if we might receive the gift, and we have not repented, but this mischief has been working all the time. And our prayers, our communions have been going on all the time; we can't make again the promises of our baptism.

I heard a sermon the other day which seemed to put this difficulty plainly. The preacher gave good advice, saying that we must pause and reflect and examine ourselves; and if we have not hardened our heart by the course I have described perhaps we can take this advice. But, I appeal to those who have consciences like my own, this is just what one can't do. We have been moving in this line, sometimes slumbering, sometimes waking, but with this habit all our life; we are pushed or pulled on by this power; we are told to think, but we can't think more than we have already done, how wrong it is; when we think we lie there in passive pain, or are overpowered with drowsiness, the fear of death doesn't rouse us and one knows that when death comes near one will be dull still.

What makes it worse is that other people think well of us all the time. The question comes to one, 'Am I a whited wall—not white, but whited? Do not people think well of me because my life is beautiful outside; and outwardly there

is much that is good and true and sweet, but do they really know?' They may have a right to think well of us, judging that much is good which they can see. Then this thought comes over one, 'They are so wrong, they don't know me; if they did they would see all sorts of bad thoughts in me so that they would recoil; if they loved me ever so much, their feelings would be like the feelings of a mother, who coming to the cradle of her child should see a snake coiled round her babe.'

Then we sometimes think that perhaps those are right who think well of us; we think perhaps, 'I am good in so many ways, and these other things don't matter. In the next world it will all be right; sin will be taken away, I shan't be troubled with these things; and indeed, before that, I think the circumstances in which I live will have changed; they will not be so trying. On the whole my friends are satisfied with me, and I think, considering the frailty of human character, I have not much cause for uneasiness. I think I am not worse than other people; perhaps very saintly people have the same sort of dissatisfaction with themselves that I have; I have heard them say very hasty things; I have heard them say worse than hasty things; I daresay they have the same sort of dissatisfaction as I have; there are a great many of us and God will be very kind. Perhaps the fact that I have this sort of dissatisfaction in the midst of my career is a good sign.'

That state of mind does not last through a great trouble or grief or shock; you say then 'It is all wrong, I must make an effort'; and then you find you cannot do so; or you determine you will try; soon you see there is some danger of your not succeeding, and you fall back on this hope, that the temptation will not come again. 'If I am tempted again, I must try.' The temptation does come again, and you try and fail. What is to be done? It is all wrong and dreadful in the sight of our own friends who are dead and gone, in the sight of God, and of Christ. You ask, 'What am I to do?'

If you still have plenty of strength you can pause, think, and make a great effort; and if God be with you, if you have

some of S. Paul's spirit, turned full blaze on the old sin, this may be successful. Even if you have obtained some earthly, worldly good, in the name of God you may resolve to use it rightly for God. Many people have changed their lives in this bold, strong way. But if it is not so with you, there is another way.

How did you get into that dangerous state?

Say to yourself, 'How did I come to this?' and you see that it was not done all at once, but by constant little acts again and again repeated against your conscience. If they were not absolutely against your conscience, at any rate they troubled you; then you thought they were not very wrong, and by constant repetition they ceased to trouble. You began to exercise self-discipline, but when you found it more convenient not to do so you gave it up; or you allowed jealousy, envy, selfishness, a godless habit to grow on you, and when you ought to have sought God's will and way, you would not. If you had intended to walk according to the will of God all day, and intended sincerely to pray, you ought to have placed yourself in contact with God first, day by day; but you fell into the habit of letting the world have contact with you first. Thus it is not by actual offences that you fell into this state, but by little things which hardly make one uneasy. For instance, some of you are particular about going to the Holy Communion in the country, where your example is important, where you wish the school children to grow up with sound principles, where you are an example to your neighbours and tenants; but in London you do not keep the same rule, other things are exciting, and no one knows what you do.

By constant repetition of little acts which troubled your conscience.

All these things are very small, but they are quite effective in producing a habit of mind and life.

You must make a fresh start corresponding to fall.

As you went down, so you must go up.

Jordan, not Abanah.

There is a great deal to be done by going up by small steps the same way that one came down. I know there is a disappointing simplicity about this. It is the same disappointment that Naaman felt when he was told to dip himself seven times in the thin, muddy stream. 'Why should I not have stayed in my own country?' But the wise servants persuaded him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some

great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean[1]?" As we went down by small steps, so for many of us the way back is to consider what small things we may offer to God; what small offences against Him we may clear out of our way.

The will is one.

Someone may say 'That is trifling; it does not touch the great misery, the separation from God.' Look at it this way; our will is all one. If I allow myself to do to-day a thing, however small, that is not right, I am refusing to let my will do its duty. If I won't exercise my will to put a little thing right, it won't exercise itself. I am creating a little wound in the will, it bleeds at the wound, it can't exert itself to make some great effort. The will would be able to make this effort if I let it exert itself to stop the selfishness, or the evil thought which has sweetness for me; but if I allow these little things, the will cannot exert itself for a great effort. Perhaps what is wrong is only the memory of some evil never corrected—

> "How sad and mad and bad it was—
> But then, how it was sweet[2]!"

But if we let memory keep something for its sweetness, knowing it is mad and bad, the will becomes incapable of a great effort. It does not matter how insignificant any one thing is in comparison with what we want to do; it is amazing how strong our will gets by little things.

A great public building may be rendered unsafe by an escape of gas; the clerk of the works says he has found an escape 200 yards off, and it seems impossible that this should be the cause of the insecurity; but the gas is driven along through the little crannies underground: when the escape is once stopped, the gas comes up no more.

One is sometimes vexed when one is in the doctor's hands because he sets himself to cure some out-of-the-way little thing: but in reality it is only when this is cured that he is able to detect what is really the matter.

[1] 2 Kings v. 13.

[2] *Confessions*, by Robert Browning.

A railway train rushes by you; at the beginning when it first starts the wheels seem to move so little, even to go back a little, but when it has once started with what speed it begins to gather impetus.

One may walk in a mountainous country seeing as one goes only the rocky path in front lying close to the mountain, but as it turns suddenly it brings one out upon a glacier with a magnificent view lying before one.

So too you may begin to ascend in darkness, only feeling a little way in front of you; you don't realise that this pebbly, hot ascent is the same that reaches the snows; but you will find after a little while that here are the great stairs "that slope through darkness up to God[1]"; you will find yourself "close upon the shining table-lands, to which our God Himself is moon and sun[2]."

This is very old philosophy, not enough regarded.

It is a very old philosophy to 'Remove the stumbling-block of your iniquity from before your face[3].' You want to be a child of God; and what does the great poet-prophet tell us to do but to 'Remove the stumbling-block of our iniquity.'

The Apostle of the Hebrews does not tell us to do great things, he knows we may not be strong enough, but he does tell us to work to "make straight paths...that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed[4]." However rough the pebbles, let the way be levelled that the lame may go over.

Result—you have been "preparing through unlikely courses," but they are not as conscientious as S. Paul's.

You are capable of making effort at little things.

What comes to us then as one of the lessons from this great soul-conversion? You have been preparing all your lives to be true servants of God; He has been with you, though you were not indeed like S. Paul, who even in his opposition was conscientious; but yet He has been preparing you—let the result come. You are capable of making an effort in little things and the strength will come, but do not go on saying you are too weak, because you can at least pursue what you know; that is all that is wanted now, and more strength

[1] *In Memoriam.*
[2] *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*
[3] Cf. Ezekiel xiv.
[4] Heb. xii. 13.

You will hear the Θάρσει at night.

will come. Then you too in the night will hear Christ's voice saying to you, "Be of good cheer."

There is a divine dissatisfaction and there is a dissatisfaction that is not divine, only human—out of this we must rise into the divine dissatisfaction that comes from God; if you let this take its course you will hear the words, "Be of good cheer."

Then the next question is "Lord, to what end?"

Probably He will tell you nothing but that you shall suffer for Him. Isn't it enough? for you know what is the end of that.

L.

March 16th, 1892.

From Jerusalem to Rome.

Acts xxiii. 12–35.

12. The Fanatic Vow. Acceptance of it by Religious Society leaders.

16. Roman Energy and its part in Christianity: a good instance. The Nephew and the Tribune (? Rom. xvi. 7). The complications caused by the adherence of the Heads of society to agitators; by the Citizenship (the nervous letter); by the Conspiracy.

23. The great Guard: no possibility of mischance allowed.

35. The Praetorium. The end of S. Paul's Free Course for years.

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1. Fanaticism. We are at the opposite pole. Excepting in the social-political form.

2. At the gates of Damascus and of Caesarea. Reversals no necessary sign of God's displeasure, rather of love.

3. Lives, which leave no choice, leave full room for following Christ. 'The Word not bound.'

The Fanatic Vow.

The first thing we come to to-day is a fanatic oath; and it seems to us almost incredible. This oath is taken by the Jewish party whose opposition is constantly brought before us by S. John.

v. 12. "And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul."

Strange and incredible as it seems, a thing of this sort happened not many years ago; when the Prince of Wales went round the Holy Land special precautions had to be

taken because he was going to enter a mosque into which no European had ever gone; and a great many men round the mosque were ready for death with torture if only they could have the happiness of plunging a dagger into the Christian who should tread the sacred place. Josephus tells us of a similar vow made by the ten men of the same Jewish party, who laid themselves as here under a curse to compass the death of Herod the Great[1], a like curse to that under which the Israelites laid Jericho when they 'devoted' it and everything in it to utter destruction[2].

v. 13. "And they were more than forty which made this conspiracy."

So these laid themselves under the curse if they did not kill Paul. Monstrous as this is, it seems as nothing to what comes so quietly after; that these mad fanatics did not lurk in the dark, but came to the chief priests.

vv. 14, 15. "And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to slay him."

You remember that in the council there was a violent party for the death of Paul, and the council had to break up because these could not carry their resolution; for when S. Paul declared himself a Pharisee, the majority was on his side. So the assassins, these zealots, came to the high priest who was in the minority, with a subtle plan: "Say you want a rehearing; the majority must agree to that, then leave the rest to us." You will notice that the fanatics are not said to have spoken to the Scribes, who were a more quiet and learned body, and would probably not think themselves justified in assenting to the murder.

Acceptance by High Priest and Elders.

The acceptance of this proposal by the high priest and elders surely is more fearful and points to a more terrible

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xv. 8. 3.

[2] Josh. vi. 17, and cf. Lev. xxvii. 28, Deut. xx. 17.

state of feeling than the oath itself. Let us try to understand it for we shall not understand ourselves thoroughly until we understand the motives which made men act thus in ways in which we are not tempted to act. Remember then that government by assassination has not so very long ago passed away; republican Venice was at one time governed thus; if anyone was dangerous to the dominant party, he was easily put out of the way with the connivance of the greatest magistrates. In this case, what the zealot party thought to be justice was unattainable; they believed that the Law of God must be kept, and that S. Paul overthrew the fundamental principle of it by bringing the Gentiles into the Church of God. Thus the condition of things had come about which Christ had spoken of when He said, "Whosoever killeth you," shall have no stain on his conscience, but "will think that he doeth God service[1]." The Roman rule was mercy and justice, compared to this condition of things, when the most religious people in the world, those who sat in Moses' seat, accepted this offer as they had accepted the offer of Judas.

Assassination where Justice was unattainable.

Then there comes in a little trait of S. Paul's family life. Hitherto we have heard nothing of S. Paul's relations, here one appears on the scene, himself a Roman citizen, to whom the captain is accessible; S. Paul's sister's son has no difficulty in entering.

The Nephew and the Tribune.

One word about S. Paul's sister's son. In the xvith chapter of the Epistle to the Romans S. Paul sends among many salutations this interesting one (*v.* 7): "Salute Andronicus and Junias[2], my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also have been in Christ before me." This is the only hint given that S. Paul had relations who were Christians before his own conversion, and who were eminent among the Christians in going about and converting the world. Perhaps this may be that very Andronicus.

vv. 16–18. "But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

[1] Jo. xvi. 2. [2] Or "Junia" as A.V. and Marginal reading R.V.

And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee."

Observe what kindness and straightforwardness there is among the military authorities.

v. 19. "And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is that thou hast to tell me?"

Then he begged the captain to interfere so that this plan might not be carried out.

vv. 20, 21. "And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee."

Roman Energy and the part it plays for Christianity.

Here you see, as in a parable, what the Roman energy was doing and going to do for Christianity; and how it gave the Christians fair play. We must put clearly before ourselves what the Roman rule was like; it was not like that of the Spaniards in America. Rome governed a conquered country by Roman law, and imposed Roman taxes, but beyond this allowed much freedom. The Romans were anxious to save Judaea; though they must rule it, for they were the masters of the world.

vv. 22–24. "So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: and he bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor."

You remember that Caesarea was the Northern, Roman capital, as Jerusalem was the Jewish capital. This was a remarkable guard, 270 horse-soldiers and 200 foot-soldiers; and "beasts" to ride, either for S. Paul and the soldier to whom he was chained side by side; or perhaps a change of beasts for S. Paul the prisoner. This is wonderfully characteristic of the Romans and their way of proceeding. The word for "spearmen" is a curious word and only once used again; they are probably light cavalry, carrying most likely a light javelin in their right hand. The party was going through the open country and liable to be attacked any moment by forty desperadoes, so that probably the spearmen were taken that they might sweep the bushes and see that no attack was made. And all this was to save a little man—whose very name means 'a little man,'—to see him safe, so that he might have a fair trial. What an array for this purpose! But the action was like our own Duke of Wellington; Claudius Lysias wanted to make it impossible that any attack should be made on Paul or on his protectors; to make it absolutely certain that without any loss of honour, or any risk, the Roman purpose should be carried through, and the man should have justice. This is one way in which the Roman Empire became such a considerable power; and this is only one little incident in the history of a nation extending over the whole world.

Lysias' promptitude.

You will understand from this the force of the passage in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians[1] where S. Paul says the man of sin will arise and bring great destruction on Christians, and goes on, "And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one." No doubt he means the Roman power which gave fair play, and restrained the terrible forces that were to break out as soon as the Roman Empire broke up.

Claudius Lysias commits to the guard the letter to Felix.

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3—8.

Difficulty of position.

Let us pause a moment to consider the extreme difficulty of Lysias' position. It would have been comparatively easy if there had merely been a great riot, and the man who was the centre of it had been seized and imprisoned; but it was complicated by the fact that the leading priests were the supporters of the riot; that the chief Pharisees were on the side of the man he had rescued. Then further Claudius Lysias had discovered the plot of forty 'dervishes' against this man's life, and that the people with whom he himself was in daily intercourse, and concerned with in the affairs of justice, were abetting the plot. This letter then is written under great difficulties.

vv. 25, 26. "And he wrote a letter after this form: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting."

His Letter.

This is the ordinary Roman greeting. "Most excellent" is used by S. Luke in the gospel, in his greeting to Theophilus; it indicates that the letter was written to someone of some rank; for it is simply a title and has no sense of moral excellence.

vv. 27–31. "This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto their council: whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was shewn to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris."

No conciliation of Jews by being adverse to Paul.

There is much to admire in Lysias; chiefly that he made no attempt to conciliate the Jews by saying anything against S. Paul. The Jews were ready to kill Paul; they would have made no scruple of accusing Lysias; there was the danger that the real fact should come out; yet he will not attempt to conciliate them by the least touch against Paul.

You see the one falsity which indicates the perplexity of

this complicated position: to lift a finger against a Roman citizen was enough to subject a Roman magistrate to the most terrible charges, and to confiscation of his property, and Lysias had gone very near this. He takes credit for having rescued Paul because he was a Roman, in order to keep himself out of trouble for having seized him, and had him carried into the castle; the scourging even had been just going to begin when S. Paul himself saved Lysias by asking his dignified question. Straightforward as Lysias is in all else, he doesn't tell the truth here; otherwise it is a plain magisterial letter, to account for sending a prisoner all the way to Caesarea to so great a magistrate as the propraetor. Thus the absolute truth of the account blossoms out all over the narrative. This nervous letter is one of the most human things in the whole narrative of the Acts; the touch of fear comes with such reality in what is otherwise a staid document of arrangements. S. Luke takes no notice of the confirmatory touches, but merely gives his simple narrative; and all this proof lies under the surface.

Just one trait of nervousness —making the best of it.

It was 70 miles to Caesarea; the whole force went to Antipatris, which was about two-thirds of the way; then the 200 foot-soldiers came back and left the horsemen. Notice that two centurions are mentioned in the 23rd verse of this chapter, but only one in the next (xxiv. 23), probably the other returned with the foot-soldiers.

vv. 32–34. "But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: and they, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia"—

"He asked of what province he was." Here is another interesting touch; I will say more about it.

v. 35. "I will hear thy cause, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace."

'Praetorium,' or headquarters of the praetor, may be fairly translated palace.

Praetorium of Herod.

What is the point of Felix's question, "What province?"

You would suppose that if he asked the question as judge, he would, on hearing that S. Paul was not of his own province, send him to his own propraetor as Lysias sent S. Paul to Caesarea. But he takes no action and it seems an aimless question. And we know from profane history that at that moment the former propraetor of Cilicia, Cossutianus Capito[1], had been accused of maladministration and had been condemned; he was a great friend of Felix. What occurs to one, then, is that Felix was almost sure to know that S. Paul came from Tarsus, so he just asked the question, "What province?" with his mind wandering away to his friend Capito, just condemned, and to his own risks. He heard S. Paul was from Cilicia; he says no more; his thoughts he keeps to himself, merely saying, "I will hear thee again when thine accusers are come." I think we are scarcely wrong in thinking that it was this that was working in his mind, and that we are thus brought face to face with his reasoning.

Fanaticism.

How strange are the things underlying all this story. In reading of this fanaticism we can't help thinking how strangely the world has altered. Then people were ready to think nothing of the crime of murder for an offence against their own ritual; to break the ritual law of the temple rendered secret murder a thing at which all the leading people of the temple and the nation would connive; for though the Pharisees were on this particular occasion on Paul's side, if he had been a Sadducee they would have combined against him.

We are at the opposite pole.

The disappearance of fanaticism appears a sign of Christianity to us who are at the opposite pole; to us, to whom it is no lasting pain to hear our Lord spoken of as a man subject to the ignorance and to all the political and sectarian influences of His time. This does not distress us, still less could it move a single being to take a strong step or even make a remonstrance. Few would be so much touched as to say a word to a man who denied our most sacred rites.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* XIII. 33.

Can we say absolutely which is best? One side is weighted with crime; on the other side the absence of emotion makes us unwilling to stir ourselves to do so much as write a letter. Have we courage with unbelievers? Is all feeling so dead as this, or only feeling about religion? When we hear in society the readiness with which not only emotional people but sensible people and those who are wise in their generation are willing to believe anything against the moral character of a person who is separated from them only by political differences, we feel inclined to doubt the deadness of feeling in matters other than religion. Be the separation ever so wide in politics it is strange that society should be so affected by it as to believe the worst traducing of the moral and social character of a leader of the other side in politics; this readiness to believe evil and think the worst shews that spiritual fanaticism is not dead. We ought to try to bring home to our own souls all the precepts which bind us not to think evil; when we get a letter sometimes describing some conduct or point of view alien to our own and inconvenient to us, we do what we call 'reading between the lines'; we can't believe such a person gives a true relation of facts; we go back on some incident displeasing to us in the past; old phrases, old facts, old looks are brought back, and we form the most unreasonable views of those we don't get on with in other things also, besides politics. Perhaps there is still a bitter root of fanaticism not gone; perhaps it is only that differences in religion don't distress us; and that politics now occupy the place of religion. Human nature is not cured so easily; it is only cured by those who believe in Christ, doing all they can to exterminate the root of bitterness in their own souls and in those of others.

Except in the social-political form.

This is a strange romantic night ride; two nights they rode. It was on the 26th of May that they started; the soldiers were waiting outside; S. Paul was quietly brought out by soldiers at the postern. They would ride sometimes through the groves of olive, sometimes by the sea; on they went in the darkness through most of the night, coming to Antipatris when the sun was hot. There

The 'Providence.'

The Contrast to Damascus.

The Leader with the Captives.

The Captive with the Leader.

The oldest Capital, the Roman Capital.

Midday, midnight.

they would stay; and ride again in the evening through the second night. I wonder whether the thought crossed S. Paul's mind how strangely things had changed, whether he thought of another ride from Jerusalem to a place more distant with guards and letters. Then he was the leader, and all with him were working for the extirpation of a sect. Now he was the captive and alone; no single heart or spirit in sympathy with his own. Then he rode to the most antient capital, the city of his father Abraham; now he was riding to the capital of a nation which had no existence when his own nation began its proud history. Then he was riding to the priests and Jewish people in power at Damascus, now to the very palace of the heathen governor. Then it was glorious midday, the sun in its strength and all things rejoicing, now they were stealing under the cover of night. This is one of those contrasts which make the essence of tragedies and romances.

When our fortunes work round to the Nadir no proof of God's displeasure:

Religious people looking on all that is happening in their own mind, when all things and all people seem to have gone round to the very opposite of what they were, are apt to think that God has found out their sin, that He is angered with them; that God orders all the concerns of their life, changes it with violent hands, that all the things they cared for are passed away, all things they dreaded are upon them; the sweetest ones they treasured swept away, their hopes blighted; all gone by God's anger, they say. Contrast sets itself against contrast; they say, "God writes bitter things against me; God remembering the sins of my youth has not only ceased to love me but rejoices in making me feel stroke after stroke. Now He gives me my reward."

> "Though the mills of God grind slowly,
> They grind exceeding small,
> Though with patience He stands waiting,
> With exactness grinds He all[1]."

So it seems to us in our bitterness.

Do you remember an old story, familiar and often repeated, of a man who took his father to the workhouse? He had

[1] *Retribution* by Longfellow (from the Sinngedichte of F. von Logan).

determined that as his family grew older he couldn't afford to keep him. He put on his father's things for the last time; he won't listen to the old man's entreaties; they go out and on their way come to a seat, and the old man says, "Let me sit here and look across the country;" and the son asks why. The father says, "Because when I took my father to the workhouse we sat down here. My sin has found me out; I hope it won't find you out." The son takes his father again home down the hill[1].

The reversals are so bitter; but do we look at them rightly when we say that God is writing bitter things against us? It is not against us. Was He writing bitter things against S. Paul, when the outburst of his zenith was thus reversed? Was it not an extraordinary assurance that in all he had been with One who had guided him in all accidents of life? That all had been carried to the opposite point shewed that he was absolutely in God's bosom, close to His heart; knowing that all things, whether by night or day, whether he were rich or poor, free or captive, were sent him in God's love.

only [a proof] of His Presence and His Hand.

If any of us are ever in such trouble, don't let us look on it as a contradiction to all we have been living in the past. We have tried in our poor manner to live to Him; do not let any cloud come down to make us feel that He is angry with us; only let us know that it is the intensity of His love, that He takes pains with us and has the power to order all things. God can do all things, and we cannot doubt that when He turns the page and shews us the back of the letters, it is only a certain token to our souls of our complete nearness to Him —His perfect penetration of what we think and feel, and His love below all.

In many ways this night ride of S. Paul's may be a comfort and strength, and more to rich people in high places than to the poor, for the lives of the well-to-do are in some ways very like S. Paul's from this point. He could not move hand or foot except at the will of others, he was obliged entirely to suit his every movement to that of the rough soldier beside him: the whole element and the atmosphere round him was

Lives which have to ride on as S. Paul had to ride.

[1] Cf. Robert Browning's version of the story in *Halbert and Hob.*

one which deprived him of the power of choice. Hitherto he had suffered days and nights in the deep, "in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren[1]"; his life had been one of peril and adventure, but he had been free, he could go where he would. 'Let us go and visit the churches in Macedonia, in Ephesus; let us go to Corinth; let us preach the Gospel of Christ where Christ's name has not been heard.'

S. Paul's position for years to come. No more Free Course.

But from this moment onwards for years he is never free. That rapid course when he passed

"like night, from land to land,"

and had

"strange power of speech,"

was over, and he was absolutely at the beck and call of a despotic heathen magistrate, of a heathen officer and heathen soldier. Yet he was not less a Christian, not less an Apostle; his bonds were "manifest throughout the whole praetorian guard[2]" at Rome.

He describes himself to the Ephesians as "an ambassador in bonds[3]." What an extraordinary figure of speech! An ambassador is the representative of a great nation, but S. Paul was the representative, not of a nation, but of God and of Christ. And then an ambassador to be in bonds! a plenipotentiary, yet in bonds! In bonds,—yet no less an ambassador,—no less a Christian; in bonds,—yet no less an Apostle; doing as much at Rome as if he were free.

Lives which have no choice leave full room for following Christ and suffering for Him.

The lives and fortunes of many of us may be such that owing to the circumstances of the society we live in we can have no will of our own, our lives may in a sense be fixed for us at all hours of the day. We do not see how to help it; there may be some will to which we must absolutely bow; and it is right that we should; but if we are in any such circumstances, where individual, immediate demands or the tyrannous course of society forces us along some groove, let us mark that our freedom or bondage has nothing to do with

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 26. [2] Phil. i. 13. [3] Eph. vi. 20.

our life in Christ. With as little freedom as possible, one may be as truly Christian, as much a son and daughter of God as ever. S. Paul ceased in one hour to be his own master for years, yet he was an Apostle, and ambassador with plenipotentiary power as high as ever, simply because he kept the law of God in his heart. Probably he had conversations about Christianity with all who came across him, whether they were receptive or not receptive. He asked the people to whom he wrote to pray for him, that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak[1]; as if he were conscious of a difficulty in speaking. It does not seem as if he did not wish to be set free, for he asks others to pray that he might be set free[2], and therefore he must have prayed himself. But what are the most glorious Epistles, which stir us most, which are marked by most force? Are they not the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Philippians? The Philippians is the most joyful Epistle; how often the word "rejoice" comes in it. Yet that is written by the "ambassador in bonds."

An Ambassador in bonds.

But the Word of God is not bound.

Let us carry away three things.

(1) To guard against fanaticism in our own hearts, which with us has this effect, to make us uncharitable.

(2) If we are living in sadness and darkness in which one early sin seems to have found us out, and we seem to be reaping the fruit of it; do not for one moment let us think that it is a sign that God is angry,—it is a sign of love which will bring us to Himself. He has ordered the circumstances of our life so as to make us feel that we are living beings, close to a Living Being, who has only one purpose—that we should be in love with Him as He is in love with us.

(3) And do not let us fancy that if we are constrained to move along certain lines, by domestic or social circumstances which have power to control our actions, that God's scheme for us is made vain; that we have any the less power to be most beautiful and most effective—to be "ambassadors in bonds."

[1] Cf. Eph. vi. 18—20; Col. iv. 3, 4.

[2] Philem. *v.* 22.

LI.

March 24th, 1892.

From Jerusalem to Rome.

Acts xxiv. 1—24.

The Accusers; Counsel; Counts; Defence.

14. "*After the Way, which they call a Sect.*"

17. Jerusalem Relief Fund—note the incidental mention, and cf. Ro. xv. 25, 26, 1 Cor. xvi., 2 Cor. viii.

18. "Whereupon," correct to "amidst which *offerings*."

22. Felix' knowledge: not prepared to make S. Paul their victim.

Drusilla. The frequent interviews 27.

The necessary inner interest of able people, however worldly, in Religion.

(1) *v.* 15. S. Paul's *Basis* of Life—in the Conscience.

The other parts of religion, Doctrine, Ritual, Emotion (Truth, Worship, Feeling) mere failures without Conscience.

Compare "Accept present salvation, &c."

(2) *v.* 16. S. Paul's *Rule* of Life.

xxiv. *v.* 1. "And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and *with* an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul."

It was now twelve days since S. Paul had gone up to Jerusalem, arriving at Jerusalem on Friday night; and five days since that night ride which was so strange a contrast to the ride with which his history began. On the fifth day the high priest himself was at Caesarea, in the great basilica. The priests brought with them from Jerusalem a great counsel. I say 'a great counsel' without hesitation, for his

speech was so full of tact and skill. Ananias and the elders were there, and Felix on the judgment seat. But there were certain people, S. Paul says, who ought to have been there and were not; their absence was significant.

vv. 2–4. "And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

"Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I intreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words."

Tact of Tertullus.

Mark the tact of Tertullus; he says not a word too much or too little in compliment to Felix; there is not a word of flattery to disgust, and at the same time he gives all the praise that is desirable. Thus, though Felix is a tyrant and cruel, he says "seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace"; the strong point of Felix' rule was the way in which he kept order, and put down the bands of assassins, who lived in the hills and watched their opportunity to strike a blow against Rome. The Romans had just lately had a great success in dispersing an army of many thousands which had come quite close to Jerusalem. So Tertullus's language is not that of a mere flatterer. "Providence" means foresight; "evils are corrected" or as we should say "reforms are effected." Felix was not a person likely to listen very patiently to a eulogy and there were good reasons why Tertullus should not go on. When we consider what kind of a man Felix was, the word "clemency" might seem exaggerated, but with all else that could be said of him he seemed indeed to have a sense of right and wrong and of mercy; here, for instance, he interposed and would not give Paul up as a victim.

v. 5. "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes."

Notice what strong language Tertullus applies to S. Paul, and notice how much of the original charge is withdrawn.

A "pestilent fellow"; the word is not used as we use

'plague,' but in reference to the destructive advance S. Paul's preaching had effected, lessening the authority of the Jews and bringing the Gentiles to feel that they were children of God as much as the sons of Abraham. S. Paul was traversing the earth to destroy that which the Jews thought sacred. "The sect of the Nazarenes," this is interesting from a literary point of view. It is the first time Christians are called by a name taken from Christ's supposed birthplace. It is a malicious name for Christians, still used among the Mohamedans.

vv. 6, 8. "Who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him."

Here we see the charge "he assayed to profane the temple." Tertullus is too clever an advocate to say that he *did* profane the temple, for S. Paul of course had done nothing which was profanation in any sense. Now they only say that he *attempted* to do it.

As we move on through points like this how living the story becomes; and we feel that we are face to face, not with the invention of a clever deviser of stories, but with men who had seen this change come over thought and language.

"We laid hold": this fearful riot is spoken of as if it were the quietest arrest in the world.

Thus we have to miss the 7th and part of the 8th verse, as they are given in the Authorised Version; for they are not found in the antient manuscripts. The insertion is correct of course, but not a part of Tertullus' speech. You see then that the word "from whom" in the 8th verse does not apply to Lysias as it appears to do ordinarily. The Authorised Version reads as if Tertullus proposed that Felix should examine Lysias for his evidence; but here it is clear that it is S. Paul who is spoken of; Tertullus is suggesting that S. Paul should be examined. You know that the meaning of the word "examine" in the Roman law is the examination of a criminal by torture. As it was not lawful to torture a Roman, Tertullus subtly means to cast doubt on S. Paul's claim to citizenship.

vv. 9, 10. "And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so.

"And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

"Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully make my defence."

"Beckoned"—nodded from the judgment seat.

"Many years"—it was only six years since Felix came to be procurator; but that was twice or three times as long a period as was usual; usually the procurators were withdrawn every two or three years, but owing to the extraordinary position of Felix's brother as Prime Minister and favourite to two emperors he had been enabled to continue in this lucrative position. Felix was familiar with all the Jewish customs.

Counts. 1. Sedition against Romans.

There were three counts in Tertullus' speech: first, that Paul was a mover of insurrection. This was in allusion to the riot at Ephesus; they were Jews from Ephesus who had brought about the accusation at Jerusalem.

2. Ringleader of Nazarenes.

Secondly, that he was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

3. "Attempt" to profane Shrine.

Thirdly, that he had tried to profane the temple.

Paul's answer.

Paul traverses each point.

vv. 11–13. "Seeing that thou canst take knowledge, that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me."

It was only twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem, and he had been here five days.

On the second point,

v. 14. "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets."

The word "Way" is the word for the Christian religion which comes again and again throughout the Acts, as used for the religion "which they call a sect."

The word for heresy means originally a "choosing" from a verb which means to choose. The substantive 'choosing' or 'heresy' means the choosing among doctrines; not the bringing in of a false Christ, but giving such extreme prominence to some doctrines as to distort their relation to the rest, and to throw the whole body of truth out of perspective; it is to choose one truth to be the leading point, the article by which Christians stand or fall; which if they hold they have all things, if they do not hold they have nothing; to choose a part of the absolute revelation of God as it suits the taste of the philosopher of the habit of mind. The body which holds these truths is a sect; while the Church is "Catholic," not only with reference to its extension, but much more to its teaching of the whole truth of God, the teaching made known, and contemplated by the believer, complete in all points.

Now is it not an interesting point that sects in S. Paul's time, as now, invariably taught that the Church was a sect? Take the word "sectarian" as it is applied in writings, or in newspapers now-a-days; it is not applied to any body so often as to the Church. The Church says "We must have children taught religion, and certain rights and duties" and there is at once an outcry among the sects, who have chosen or laid stress on some doctrines and neglected other parts of Catholic teaching; they cry directly "This is sectarian." S. Paul says this began in his own day when he speaks of "the Way"—the whole teaching of God in Christ—"which they call a sect." "I take the whole circle of truth, I do not lay stress on one or two points—I believe all the Catholic doctrine."

Try to divest the word "catholic" of all modern associations, go back to what is fundamentally its meaning—the great universal truth of God.

vv. 15, 16. "Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a Resurrection both of the just and unjust. Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway."

Here we almost come to the climax—S. Paul and his conscience. What is the secret of this great man's activity and love for souls, his desire to reconcile God and man, to bring God to men, to be an ambassador for Christ to men, what filled him with Divine enthusiasm, brought him happiness in the midst of intense suffering, so that in his letter to the Philippians from Rome he is always breaking out with joy? We will come back to this point.

The word "exercise" is that from which "ascetic" comes, it means the drill of soldiers, the practice of sailors, or the keenness with which great studies are carried on, the practice of learning language over and over again to the minutest points till it can be written and spoken without the possibility of making a mistake. "I exercise myself" as men exercise themselves when they have some great aim, when they determine to perfect themselves in something. "To have a conscience void of offence toward God and men,"—in heart to love God and men and to "exercise" himself in this.

'I believe and serve God in the way they call a 'sect'; all they believe I believe; I believe and know about the books of the law and the prophets. They believe in the Resurrection, so do I. They believe the just and unjust shall rise again. So do I. The secret of my life is that I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man.'

He has nothing more to say about himself; he goes back to the charges; he has given the answer as to his being a pestilence and a stirrer up of sedition; and he goes on to the immediate charge of profaning the temple.

v. 17. "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings." The Jerusalem Relief Fund.

"Offerings." He refers to the vow that he vowed in Caesarea, the custom of letting the hair grow and then bringing it up to offer at Jerusalem.

"Alms." Refer to the Epistle to the Romans (xv. 25 f.) and the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xvi. 1 ff.) and you will see how in the midst of his preaching he took care of organisation, and made everywhere a collection from Jews in

aid of the poor people who were excommunicated and oppressed at Jerusalem. This is the only place in which it is mentioned in the Acts[1]. This is one of those delicate concordances which are the most important evidence of truth when we compare them together. We have gone through the Acts and there has been nothing to tell us about the collection, when, casually in a speech, S. Paul mentions it: "I came to bring alms." Then when we look at his letters we see with what care he gives the direction to make arrangements about it; how it is to be kept, how finally when he goes to Jerusalem he will carry it along with him. The amount of the alms must by now have been very considerable; Felix learnt from it that Paul had command of people's purses; and "he hoped money would have been given him"; he kept S. Paul in confinement because he thought that the man who commanded such large gifts would be sure to have friends.

"To my nation." It has been often observed by foes as well as friends that S. Paul was such a gentleman, as we should call it. There are two words in Greek that mean nation; the Jews always arrogated to themselves the more important word λάος. They called the other nations ἔθνη from which we get our word "heathen." They called the Romans themselves ἔθνος. But S. Paul, speaking to Felix does not use the usual word λάος for his own people, but ἔθνος so that he may not be guilty of the least assumption or arrogance.

vv. 18, 19. "Amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but there were certain Jews from Asia—who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me."

Then he speaks of the injustice of his treatment; there was no tumult, and there were certain Jews from Asia, "who ought to have been here to make accusation." All the riot came from the accusation they made, and now they 'ought to have been here if they had aught against me. They are the

[1] A special collection for sufferers by the famine is mentioned Acts xi. 29, 30.

people on whose evidence everything was done, yet they are not brought as witnesses. Well, I will not stand on that—let them say themselves what I was guilty of; they will not accuse me now of having done violence; their counsel has not accused me of that.'

v. 20. "Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found, when I stood before the council"—and here, he seems to say "I accuse myself."

v. 21. "Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the Resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day."

'I did divide them, I appealed to the fact that some of them believed, and others did not believe in the Resurrection.'

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

I dare not say that it was wrong, but it does seem that S. Paul thought that his action here had been too refined, too subtle[1]; it does not touch the main charge; he had said 'I am innocent'; but he had gone further and set his judges at variance. If it is so, who does not admire the beauty of the uncalled-for confession; how it bears out his speech "I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence." Who would accuse a man who stood between life and death for having done anything in this way to divide his judges?

v. 22. "But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter."

How should Felix have more exact knowledge concerning the Way?

At Caesarea Felix might have learnt the Way.

Do you remember that the first Gentile that was converted was converted at Caesarea, and was an officer in the army? He lived at Caesarea. That is not pointed out here, but so it was. Among the officers of his troops Felix had perhaps this Cornelius, the first Christian, who had been converted with his whole family. When S. Paul landed at Caesarea it mentions how many Christians he found there[2].

[1] Cf. pp. 557 f. [2] Cf. p. 521.

At present Felix only defers the matter. "When Lysias ...shall come down, I will determine your matter."

vv. 23, 24. "And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him. But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus."

Felix is not easy about the man; the history goes on to say that he sent for him often. There is the climax of the strong acts of S. Paul—his effect on Felix.

What was it he taught Felix—this man who exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence?—sitting in a room of the gorgeous palace conversing with Felix and Drusilla.

Felix.

Felix was a man of immense wealth, his brother was Prime Minister at Rome. He was the chief man in this society, a person entrusted with one of the great duties of the world; sent down to the governorship of this province in the same position as the Viceroy of India or the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Felix had been married—in a way—three times. It was said[1] that he had married three queens.

Drusilla.

The first was the daughter of Juba, king of Mauritania. The second wife was this Drusilla[2]; we do not know the name of the third. This Drusilla was the wife of Azizus, King of Emesa, the sister of Agrippa II., and daughter of the Agrippa who died at Caesarea, while he was making his oration. By means of a man whose name was Simon (perhaps Simon Magus who was one of the spirit-working people of the time), Felix had seduced Drusilla from her husband and had married her[3]. Think of such a guilty pair, profligate both of them to the last degree, intensely interested in religious questions, and very anxious to hear about the faith of Christ. It was a

Fashionable interest in Paul.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 28.

[2] Drusilla is said by Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 9) to be the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra; but by Josephus to be the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. (*Ant.* XIX. 9. 1).

[3] Cf. *The Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. II. p. 123. The identity of this Simon with Simon Magus of the Acts is, however, uncertain if not impossible.

fashionable interest in religion; religion was fashionable then as now. These fashionable people were specimens of Roman society sent down to the provinces; they were people of the highest position—the man the brother of the Prime Minister, his wife the daughter of the late King, the favourite of the Emperor of the world. They were kept back by no scruples from tasting life to the full; and they had now got hold of a man who could tell them all about a new faith; they sent for him and heard him often.

From his intercourse with this versatile, successful sensualist, from this defence, and his arguments after, we learn Paul's view of religion. How did S. Paul treat him? Evidently with the utmost deference; he was ready to go into the question, but what were his topics?

His topics:

Righteousness, temperance, or self-control, and judgment to come. Justice—which Felix violated every day; self-control, which they had so outraged; and the future—that they would not always be in this position, that death was coming.

Justice, Self-control, Judgment.

Would our fashionable teachers be as certain to take this line? S. Paul had no idea of patching up a sensual life; he might have taught them about the life of Christ and tried to shew the beauty of His Life, Death and Resurrection; but he does not seem to have done so. He was the great teacher of Christ, his great topic was the cross of Christ; the words "in Christ" are found everywhere in his writings; but this is not what he teaches Felix. Felix wanted to hear about faith in Christ; yet Paul reasoned of righteousness, of self-control, and of judgment to come. There is nothing about the glory and beauty of religion, nothing said of Paul's overwhelming this bad, sensual man with it; Felix was not far on enough for that.

No idea of patching up a sensual life.

What are the parts of religion? S. Paul desired above all things that this man should be religious, but what is religion?

We might roughly define it as conscience, and morals or obedience to conscience; doctrine, true teaching or the knowledge of all the facts; worship and emotion. We may

take roughly these four points: Conscience, Truth, Worship, and Emotion.

Without Conscience and obedience to it, doctrine, ritual, emotional religion [are] failures and no lasting Peace;

But S. Paul knew, what we ought to know, that doctrine, ritual, and emotional religion are failures unless conscience is at work; if conscience is not obeyed, all Catholic teaching is a failure.

There are plenty of people who have been touched in the midst of their worldly life, have seen the peace and joy of religion, people who long before all things to have religion, to be at peace with themselves, who have gone accurately into the teaching of the Church, but have not obeyed their conscience meanwhile; and the day comes when they say that truth is not truth; it is hollow.

Some people have flung themselves passionately into the beauty of worship; turning away from sin, the sight and sound of the worship of the Church has become inexpressibly beautiful and dear; but if they lived long, in the end they have found that was hollow, because they went on in inward sin. They did not realise that "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts"; they did not discipline themselves inwardly to please God; they did not set themselves to please Him above all; they set some romantic touch in the midst of Catholic teaching and worship.

Others have believed that they could hold simply an emotional religion.

but are the way to infidelity when their valuelessness is discovered.

These three things people have tried to take instead of the discipline of Conscience and Life; and keen-sighted worldly people begin to believe that these things are without truth because they expected that others would live according to what they profess, but they see that they do not really reform the inner man.

S. Paul makes no compromise, he knows sin is a leprosy; there is no cure for leprosy, but having again, like Naaman, the flesh of a little child; one must be all pure in the inward secret parts. If the leprosy of sin is to be met it cannot be met by perfect knowledge of truth, nor by the humbleness of self-prostrations, nor by services of the warmest devotion, if these things are not manifestations of a true conscience.

We know, we are sure, that we approach the truth when we help others to be Christians, or when we go to the beginning by ourselves, and take that foundation of conscience. If we do not do so we know that the day will come when we shall say "I have been through all that—doctrine, worship, emotion, and there is nothing in it." No one says that who has begun with conscience.

There is nothing about S. Paul's preaching to these people and saying that they have nothing to do but to accept Christ, and believe that they are forgiven; there is nothing about accepting a present salvation. To him the beginning of religion was conscience. Felix was not nearly far enough on for any of those things to be used to him which some of our rash teachers address to the most refined, or to the most hardened sinners. Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come—determining to judge ourselves as we know we shall be judged in the Last Day—this is what is necessary.

It is this only which can make truth and worship lastingly delightful, and emotion even honest—to have a firm determination to use self-control within, to exercise ourselves, to have a conscience void of offence.

LII.

March 31st, 1892.

From Jerusalem to Rome.

Acts xxiv. 25; xxv.

xxiv. 25. His Conscience not lifeless. Its action barred by Procrastination and Love of Money:—such common causes.

27. Felix disappears in Rome with penalties, but not for crimes only for ill-success.

xxv. 1. Porcius Festus, just man and firm. Strong position of S. Paul. *Second* Trial on Caesarea. 'I appeal': effect of the word.

23. The 'Singular Incident' of the Audience of Courtesy.

Continue from xxiv. 16.

Not Frailty but want of Intention the common cause of the poorness of lives: shown by Failures, by Successes.

The enfeebling power and at last the torment of an allowed Unconscientiousness. Thoroughness.

Basis of life in Conscience.

I should like to refer back to what I said last time as to the Basis of Life being laid in Conscience.

I did not mean to say that Morals and Religion are the same thing; but that there is no true religion without morals. God's power, His manifestation of Himself in Nature, His manifestation of Himself in man; all that, as Man, He has borne and suffered, all that, as God, He has wrought in man; all that He is to Himself, all that He is to us—which is what we mean by doctrine, the doctrine of the Church, or Catholic doctrine—this is the most elevating of all knowledge; people are brought by it into close contemplation of God, though

they are brought close in different ways. It is said that two great sages met and talked of God and Truth and Life, and when they parted one of them said with a sigh, "What I know, he sees"; and the other sighed and said, "What I see, he knows." The doctrines may present themselves to a powerful mind either in the way of intuition, so that they are seen after contemplation as self-evident truths; or they may be built up by true philosophy in the way of knowledge, not merely as taking hold of the sympathies or imagination. But it is not enough to know the truth, it is not enough to see the truth; that is not religion; it is a part of religion, but not the whole. Worship, with all its humbling and elevating powers, is the bounden duty of Christians; it is their duty to worship, as S. Paul says, so that the heathen coming in and seeing the Christian at his devotions should be converted, and falling down should confess that God is in them of a truth[1]. Do you know how S. Augustine speaks of the time before he was brought to the truth, when the anthem was rolling along the roofs of the African Church, and he was stirred to the depths? But even that was not religion. Doctrine and Worship are not religion, nor is even the truest emotion—which with some counts more than truth or reverence—the setting of the tides of the spirit towards Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, the feeling of the spirit, stricken in the midst of its sin by seeing the bleeding figure on the Tree, and all that follows in the region where we dare not pursue it in words; all these, however perfect, will not last a lifetime. The time will come, when, if conscience is not our constant care, if we do not exercise ourselves like S. Paul to have a conscience void of offence, if we will not try to reduce our conscience and character to obedience, truth will seem hollow and worship a vain lie, and emotion an imagination; if these are to keep their power we must have what S. Paul strove to bring into the heart of Felix—the conformity of the heart and life to righteousness; we must have self-restraint, the

Doctrine, Worship, Emotion will fail without that activity of Conscience though no Religion is complete without them also.

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

sense that for every idle word we shall give account, because God has ordained a Man to judge the world, because all shall stand to be judged for the deeds that they have done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Whether we have been brought up from childhood in the knowledge and to some extent in the love of God, whether we have known little or nothing about the truth, whether we have been moved or not to reverence or emotion; whether we have or have not any of those things, we must have a conscience as pure as we can, if we are to be like a house that can stand. What good would it have been to awaken Felix's emotional love of Jesus before speaking to him of the condition he knew himself to be in? Would that have broken down Felix? The question answers itself. But "judgment to come" in S. Paul's mind did mean something about Jesus the judge of all; Felix must have known of the living Being said by the Jews to be dead; S. Paul must have spoken something to him of this, but what he spoke of was the tremendous certainty that this Man who was dead would come again to ask after the law and Felix's obedience to it. Was it any good to stir Felix's conscience? Had such a man —a Roman, so stern, so hard, so finished in education, so determined to surround himself with luxury—a conscience at all? We might think that if any man's conscience could have died, his must have, as he sat there with the beautiful partner of his sins.

"Judgment to come" implies Jesus spoken of.

There is a fine idiom, hardly rendered in English by the "Felix trembled" of the Authorised Version. Felix grew afraid as S. Paul reasoned; he was not impressed with an awful voice and gestures, but as he *reasoned*, Felix was terrified and said, "I will call for thee." Then his conscience was not dead. We must believe and know that in any human being on this side the grave conscience is not dead.

Conscience not dead even in Felix.

vv. 25, 26. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. He

hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

What frustrated it was (1) procrastination, (2) Paul's command of purses.

There is a great deal of teaching in these short words; what frustrated the effect of S. Paul's reasoning and prevented the awakening conscience from doing its work? What made the inward fear and trembling no use? Two terribly simple things. Procrastination and the love of money. One of them is in everyone, the other far too powerful.

"Go thy way for this time"—procrastination; 'we should like to ascertain further, but we must put it off to a more convenient season.' Two years dragged out in this procrastination; for Felix thought that as S. Paul was able to raise such large sums all over the world for the poor saints at Jerusalem he might be able to get together a ransom. Procrastination and the desire for money acted in Felix as procrastination and any worldly motive will act. "He trembled," but said, "Go thy way." How many souls there are which tremble when they get a glimpse of truth, but procrastination and some worldly motive are just sufficient to keep them back from repentance.

Felix disappears back into Rome with penalties.

Felix had a melancholy end; he disappeared, so to speak, back into Rome. At the end of his eight years' governorship there broke out, while S. Paul was still there, the most unfortunate tumult in Caesarea, an outbreak of Jew-hate which keeps breaking out still, in Russia and other countries, because the people among whom they live cannot bear to see the prosperity of the Jews. S. Paul must have heard the cries in his prison, though he himself was safe because Felix was answerable for him. This street outbreak went on for a long time, and Felix put an end to it by allowing the troops to take the part of the Greeks against the Jews; they massacred the Jewish mob and plundered their houses. The scene has been repeated many times to the disgrace of Christendom. At the end of his governorship, charges were made to the Emperor at Rome against him. Felix's brother was still at Rome, and prevented Felix from suffering the severer punishment which would have come if he had

been prosecuted for cruelty; but as it was, Felix lost a large part of his property. Thus God did not punish the man for crimes which he might have prevented; but it was rather a misfortune for which he was recalled to Rome.

Overcome not by crimes but by difficulties of situation.

v. 27. "But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds."

Porcius Festus, just man and firm.

The man who succeeded Felix was very different, very firm, very just. There had been other changes; the new high priest, Ishmael, was an extreme Sadducee and the Pharisees were banished from court. He was surrounded by supporters of the Sadducean party and inherited in a worse form the hostility to S. Paul. And taking the opportunity given by the coming in of a new governor a plot was formed against Paul.

xxv. *vv.* 1—3. "Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait to kill him on the way."

S. Paul was to be sent for on the ground that he should be tried at Jerusalem with legal appliances, and in the presence of those who could bear evidence. Whether Festus had any acquaintance with the plot or not he might fairly refuse the request.

vv. 4, 5. "Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Caesarea, and that he himself was about to depart thither shortly. Let them therefore, saith he, which are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him."

Second trial at Caesarea. Paul's defence as before.

The high priest comes, therefore, to the new trial at Caesarea, and S. Paul makes the same defence under the same three heads as before.

vv. 6—8. "And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the

Jews which had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges, which they could not prove; while Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all."

Festus asks S. Paul (*v.* 9), "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" He is not going in any case to let S. Paul go to Jerusalem to be judged before the high priest. 'If you will go to Jerusalem I will preside, you shall have fair treatment.' Festus is desirous "to gain favour with the Jews" as far as he could; but when the case has gone before a Roman magistrate he cannot transplant it back without the consent of the prisoner; so he puts it fairly in a straightforward, businesslike way: 'Will you go?'

Consent necessary.

No! S. Paul is thinking of the plot, and that what happened in the case of Pilate might, if he went to Jerusalem, happen again; the populace might be roused and the governor have to give way before them as he did before.

S. Paul's importance not diminished in the two years.

Glance for one moment at the importance of S. Paul, which had not diminished this year. He was still the great centre on which the question between Judaism and Christianity would turn, as the Jews perceived. We know that S. Paul had leading men from Thessalonica with him, Aristarchus and another; from his Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians and Philemon it appears possible that Timothy was also with him, for he writes to Philemon directly after arriving at Rome and he mentions who were with him in the 24th verse[1]. From Acts xxvii. 1 too we see that Luke was with him. S. Luke always keeps himself in the background and his presence is only shewn by the expression "that *we* should set sail." So S. Paul was supported by these able men; Luke the great writer, and Aristarchus, the principal person in Thessalonica. If we read the Epistle to the Romans

[1] But cf. p. 517 and see *The Epistle to the Philippians* by J. B. Lightfoot, p. 11, "It may perhaps be inferred from Luke's silence, Acts xxvii. 2, that Timotheus did not accompany S. Paul on his journey to Rome, but joined him soon after his arrival."

His constant messengers, widespread influence.

we shall see the messages he sent, and the constant intercourse kept up by means of messengers, which spread far and wide his influence over the Christian Church. But there is no letter written by S. Paul from Caesarea, where he was impressing all with his ability, character and determination, where he was maintaining through messengers constant influence over the whole civilised world of the time.

vv. 10, 11. "But Festus, desiring to gain favour with the Jews, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? But Paul said, I am standing before Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of those things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."

"I appeal," had force to suspend Provincial Judicature.

This account corresponds to what was the exact state of Roman law; the judgment of a Procurator or Propraetor counted as the judgment of the Emperor Augustus[1]; but by antient right a prisoner might appeal from a great governor to the Emperor or to some judge of appeal, appointed to hear causes at Rome itself[2]. No governor could refuse to listen to the appeal, but it was possible to decide with assessors if the appeal should go on. If it was refused a great responsibility rested on the governor, for which he would have to give account; so it was seldom refused, unless the case was very clear. So Festus confers with his council. This was not a formal council; each governor had a fresh cabinet; and the assessors had no official responsibility; they were called 'friends,' *φίλοι*, *πάρεδροι*. So S. Paul says, "I stand at Caesar's judgment-seat." 'I appeal from this tribune of yours to the Roman Emperor's judgment-seat where I ought to be judged; I have been two years here and cannot get judged; no decision is given; I have been heard over and over again;' "to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest." What spirit there is here.

Then comes the rest of the scene; Festus called together

[1] Ulpian, *Dig.* I. 19. 1. [2] *Dig.* XLIX. 1, 2, etc.

his council or 'friends,' and this was plainly a case he could not refuse.

v. 12. "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Caesar: unto Caesar shalt thou go."

The government was now chargeable for conveying S. Paul safe to Rome; there he would be judged either by the Emperor—who generally heard religious causes—or by one of the men who had served as consul and were appointed from year to year as judges of appeal. This account must have been written at the very moment when these laws were in force.

Paul wished to go to Rome, and had been told by Christ he would.

There is one more point: S. Paul was already anxious to go to Rome; and this may have been underlying his desire to appeal to the justice of the Emperor. He says before, that after Jerusalem he wishes to "see Rome also"; and at Jerusalem our Lord shews him in the vision that the wish of his heart is granted. "As thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so thou must bear witness also at Rome."

This state prisoner has now gone through the regular course of trial, and comes under the administration of the laws. You remember how long he had been kept on bail by the unjust man Felix; but when a great procurator came all went according to the natural course of justice.

Agrippa. Bernice.

Now we come to a singular incident—the appearance of S. Paul before Agrippa. This was not a trial. No further trial was possible. The proceedings had come to an end, stopped by that single word "*appello*" ("I appeal"), a Roman word powerful to suspend any other judgment. So the hearing before Agrippa and Bernice was a hearing of courtesy; of courtesy on the part of Festus, and of courtesy on the part of S. Paul who consented to be heard.

Not a Trial, an audience of Courtesy.

Agrippa, with his sister Bernice, who lived with him, after the death of her first husband, Herod, the king of Chalcis, comes as head of the tetrarchy to pay his respects to the new governor on his arrival.

v. 13. "Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea, and saluted Festus."

Two different histories happen to mention Agrippa's going, once to Egypt, once to the new governor of Jerusalem on a visit of courtesy; the visit is characteristic of him, a part of his perfect, accomplished, high-bred way.

The arrangement—a scheme of drawing up a fuller brief.

When he arrives, Festus feels that here is a new light on the subject. There is no one who has a more perfect acquaintance with the details of Jewish law than Agrippa; and Bernice, the fashionable lady, takes a great interest in religion. Festus is not used to the kind of thing, he feels he shall only send a blundering epistle to the Emperor to account for sending the prisoner, for it is absolutely necessary to send a schedule of what the accusation is. The visit of Agrippa and Bernice is the very opportunity needed.

vv. 14–18. "And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him. To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him. When therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed."

What Festus had expected was treason then.

v. 19. "But had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

You see the amazement of Festus at the kind of question he was expected to decide; Shakespeare could not have invented a speech so perfect; it goes so near the facts, and shews how the Roman looked on them. It was not merely that he did not know how to decide the point, but he did not know how to set about it, what questions to ask.

v. 20. "And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning

these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters."

"Jerusalem"—'the proper arena as it seemed to me of such a hearing.'

vv. 21, 22. "But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the Emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Caesar. And Agrippa said unto Festus, I also was wishing[1] to heár the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him."

Agrippa already interested.

Notice this fine point. "*I also was wishing* to hear the man myself." The fame of John the Baptist may have come down to Agrippa from his great-grandfather Herod the Great, and he wanted to know the truth.

v. 23. "So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in."

Our translators did not see the point of one satirical word here, *φαντασίας*, 'phantasy,' which they have translated 'with great pomp'; the word implies, as you will see a little later, a sneer at the vanity of display.

"With the chief captains." There were always three legions quartered at Caesarea; even now we know their numbers; their officers and the principal men of the city, the second capital of the country, were at the hearing. It was an impressive audience then, of the greatest power, sense and intellect, with one of the persons most accomplished in the law of the Jews presiding over it. That is why S. Paul says (xxvi. 2), "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day"; it was quite a different thing from being heard by Felix or Festus.

vv. 24, 25. "And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live

[1] Marginal reference; the text gives "could wish."

any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death: and as he himself appealed to the Emperor I determined to send him."

Festus makes a ceremonious speech, Paul had committed no capital crime.

v. 26. "Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord." 'I do not understand the question.' "Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, King Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write"—'that I may draw up the indictment.'

v. 27. "For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him."

By good luck, there had come the most competent of men, one who could hear the whole thing, and help the sturdy, unfortunate Roman governor, undisciplined in religion, to send a schedule of the charges. How one wishes one could see the singular incident, which was no trial, but an opportunity of getting at the facts and drawing up the papers.

Next time we shall notice the freedom of S. Paul, his versatility, how he caught the tone of his audience, who were no Jews this time, but the king and the great Roman staff.

There we leave him and go back to Chapter xxiv. 16. On this great page of antient history we see the contrast of character of the Roman and Jewish citizens.

Clearly there is an animus against S. Paul and his teaching—"I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man." That to him is the great secret—to exercise himself in his conscience. Conscience is the basis of life. If my conscience is to be clear of offence I must exercise myself. S. Paul's words mean 'I intend to have a conscience void of offence towards God and men, and further I take steps to have it so': that is how I should paraphrase the word "exercise"—'*I intend and take steps.*' Plainly that is the secret of S. Paul's life and if his is a true life it must be the secret of ours.

Conscience is the Basis of Life. What is the Rule of Life?

αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ ἔχειν.

Consider the case of two persons, of whom one is regular in all the duties of life, also in private prayer and public prayer: and the other has the same time which gives to the first

The difference lies in intention.

prayer, devotion, communion, reading, self-exercise, but where does the time go? In idleness, sleep, diversion, or in an extraordinary press of little business. One has time, or makes time, and is calm; the other has no such time. There may be no difference in the strength of these two; one may have just as strong a character as the other, just as powerful a will. But the difference lies here: that although both know that to please God they must seek Him, though both know that if He is our Father and we are His children we must go to Him, one *intends* to please God in these ways, and the other does not.

The same thing applies in other matters, in dividing time, in assigning different items of expenditure: the one has the *intention* of using both as well as he can, spending means in reasonable, good objects; the means of the other flow down the stream of vain, unreasonable expenditure. The imperfection of one kind of life does not lie in frailty, but in that the man really has not the intention to use God's time and God's gifts as well as he can; he makes no resolution, or his resolutions are forgotten as soon as made: the other has his mind full of this intention and adopts means to this end.

If we have been dissatisfied with ourselves and own that we went wrong—let us question ourselves "Did I do so after *intending*—giving all my mind to doing right?" The word "intend" means to "stretch like a bowstring." Let us ask then 'Did I form an intention, stretching my mind to it, to please God, when days, months and years began afresh? Did I *intend* to set time apart for devotion, to please God, or did I not? If I did not intend to please God I have not failed through weakness or frailty, but simply because I was not referring the question to my conscience, not exercising myself, not really meaning to do what was pleasing in God's sight with these gifts of His. Say that I was yielding or cruel; did I *intend* to be simply kind or stern?'

Felix did not intend; he heard, and trembled, and put it off; he had another worldly game to pursue; therefore his trembling came to nothing. You too are dissatisfied with yourself; the days go by and you have not come to a decision

on some difficult question; because you have not taken it before God. Judging by our failures, the thing that is wanted is not power but intention.

Shewn (1) from our experience of failures.

Think of one of those failures which come nearest home and in which, if they should be incurable, you feel the misery, and will feel it to the end: the failures with regard to the religion of a child—if one is agnostic, if one is Roman Catholic; either one thing or the other fills us with deep distress because we are Church people, and such ways of thinking are highly grievous to us.

But what did you do about the child's religion? Have you been from the very first very thoughtful, careful in instruction, anxious to bring home to the conscience and life the principles of truth? If so, when the great misfortune comes, you can lay your hand on your lips and entreat God to bring His blessing out of it. But how stands the case if you have not been thoughtful, if you have not read the Bible with the children, and do not work quietly, as you are able, by little questions to lead on from it; if you do not have family prayers, or only have prayers with the servants (and the servants do not come when the master and mistress do not); or if you only have prayers when a clergyman is present; if you do not have grace at table in order to ask that those things may be blessed which though they were involved in the primal curse[1] have been plentiful to us all from the first up to now; if you have not asked God to bless His gifts, if you do not give Him thanks, nor lay your heart before God, who has created all to be received with thanksgiving; if you think it fanciful that religion should go down to these *minutiae*, so that from morning to night the children do not see the presence of religion? You send them to church with servants perhaps, or if you go sometimes you let a little thing stop you; you go to Communion in the country but not in town; you do not begin your day by devotion, but allow your letters to be brought early, and let the business of the day begin first; and all the day long the world is with you, very

[1] "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Gen. iii. 19.

importunately, and you are doing what you think to be duties, without placing your own soul before God. The children know this, they go to church, they are proud of the Church; they think the reformed Church of England is the best Church, but they do not see what difference this makes to life. They see little by little that religion is detached from conscience, they do not see any attempt to have a conscience clear before God, though you may make it void of offence before man perhaps. But God—how does God come in? The children must reason: they may think there is no sense in the profession of Christianity; or they may say, "I won't have any hypocrisy in my life; I will not live worse than my parents, but I will either accept religious doctrine, or refuse it." You have no influence over them, they are more logical than you. The young heart does not know God who is about his paths and about his bed, who spies out all his ways; he does not know that God has done something in the way of sacrifice for him beyond all expression. He feels that if God were really about his path he must love God, and he cannot understand how if you believe, the influence of your belief does not come into your half-dark life. He will have a form of religion which *does* reason, but he sees that religion does not affect you. The heart of another child demands a religion which leads to oneself; every room must have its symbol of faith, and outward symbols must be worked into all particulars of life. The children take one line or the other, as reason or the heart speaks, because religion is not taught in the old Church of England way—the Duty to God and Man.

How did you intend? You know what very great importance it is what the child is given; did you intend it should be brought up in the faith and fear of God? Was it your greatest hope that it should die in Christ? If you did not intend, you cannot be surprised at what happened; it was not want of strength but of intention. Whether you look at the commonest facts or the deepest things, it is intention that makes the whole difference. Look at the objects in which you do intend; see if the children are not faithful, dutiful to father and mother, cherishing those who have to look to them to be

Shewn (2) from our experience of success.

cherished, pure as the day, sober-minded, just; not because they are stronger in these ways, but because you do *intend*, because nothing would cut you like the thought of dishonour in your children, or their failure in duty to those they love, failure in faithfulness, trust, failure to respond to the appeal to cherish the power of purity, soberness and sweetness. We do intend some things and they are what we intend.

If you will apply your mind to be sincere in the confession of faith, appointing times for yourselves; making it no mere matter of fashion to care for the child's soul, you would succeed to the same perfection with which you succeed in all the things you do intend. Whether you look at success or failure you see that the absence of true religion and conscientiousness springs from nothing but the absence of intention.

'Απρόσκοπον. One little block often left either πρὸς θεὸν or πρὸς ἄνθρωπον.

S. Paul had a "conscience void of offence," no stumbling-block should be left. You fall: does your conscience tell you that you fell so before? "I am very much ashamed," you say, "I did so and so, I failed. What shall I do?" "Well, did you fail before?" "Yes." "Did you lose your temper before?" "Yes." "Often?" "Yes, as long as I remember, constantly, because all else was smooth and right; but every time I come across some one stumbling-block, my foot catches, and I fall." This is the meaning of "offence." There is a way, on which you stumble and fall, because some stumbling-block is left in it—one scruple, one little thing which you know to be wrong. If day after day you never thoroughly cure it, it will be the one thing to prevent your having peace at the last.

Thoroughness of intention.

I know a pure, holy, just, true Christian who died when he was over eighty, and he was troubled on his deathbed by one offence, committed before he was twenty, which he knew he had never repented of; all the activity of his life lay apart from this; never till the last moment had he had perfect repentance.

So with us all, if we will not consider what the right way is, it will cause a stumbling-block, day after day. And we shall not have peace at the last, or only by a great contest. Better clear it away, and have light as well as peace at death.

LIII.

April 8th, 1892.

From Jerusalem to Rome.

Acts xxvi.

S. Paul's *Apologia* before Agrippa II.

5. The most precise sect of our worship.
7. Our twelve-tribe-body serving in earnestness.
11. Was for compelling them.
22. Which the Prophets did say should come—and Moses.

8. No *a priori* incredibility in resurrection.

16. Our Lord's words to him.

24. The Roman's impression and the Prisoner's.
Courtesy, Promptitude, 'Touch,' Intensity of Paul.
"Such as I am—except these bonds."

29. "Almost thou persuadest me." You make short work of persuading me.

32. Drafting of Document. Step gained in two years.

As spiritual teachings of "Conscience" and "Exercise" came up before Felix, so now *v.* 18. "Conversion."

"Conversion" except of heathen not a prominent term in N.T. Its true meaning and what necessity for it. An Act of Will in it; 'was not disobedient' (v. 19). Three steps:—1. Repentance (Change in Mind). 2. Conversion (implies Faith, *v.* 18). 3. Worthy Action.

Compare The "Foundation," Heb. vi. 1.

Paul's third Apologia.

We are fully prepared then for the position in which matters now stand. This is not a trial of S. Paul, but what we may call an *Apologia pro vita sua*, an account of his life; intended not so much to answer charges as general prejudices.

There is no accusation, no high priest thirsting for his blood, no orator, no able counsel's technical accusation. He is standing in the hall of the Praetorium in Caesarea, in the presence of the learned King Agrippa, who was looked on as a sort of authority on many subjects of minute knowledge: of Bernice, the beautiful woman who had lived among such a storm of temptations in the Roman Empire from her childhood upwards, who after the death of her husband had now come to live altogether with her brother: and there was the honest, high-minded, well-bred Festus, the Procurator, who says that he can't send an account of his prisoner to Rome as he is unable to enter into the subtleties of the accusation against him; there are moreover the officers of three legions, and the wealthy and noble Jewish occupants of the place. S. Paul's great audience of these competent listeners is quite different from what he had had before; he is pleased with his audience, he is pleased with his competent auditor, when he says, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa ...because thou art an expert."

Paul pleased with a competent auditor.

xxvi. 1–3. "And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence: I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

He is careful to use a particular term "an expert." "Customs and questions"; for a man to be familiar with customs he must have lived among them: "questions" means all theological questions: amongst the Jews customs were discussed by means of questions and answers; and the Talmud and the other Jewish books which are all arranged as a series of questions concerning human duty or divine things bear witness to this practice: "Rabbi So-and-so asked such and such a question": "Rabbi So-and-so replied." S. Paul knows his man: Agrippa is proud not only of knowing all questions, but all the customs. You know from

the Gospels how it was thought necessary to carry down the customs to what seems to us ridiculous. S. Paul, speaking to an expert in all customs, as well as in all questions, is able honestly to express satisfaction.

"He stretched out his hand." Remember that that hand had a manacle on it. One might think that he would have been set free, but we see it was not so, because in *v.* 29 he says, "except these bonds."

This defence, this Apologia given with such freedom, contains many little particulars that are missing in the other accounts of S. Paul's conversion. Some people are disposed to miss this chapter after reading the 9th chapter, but there are some particulars here which are nowhere else.

v. 4. "My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first,..."

This is the only place where we learn that S. Paul was very young when he went to Jerusalem. "Know all the Jews." I have before remarked that he uses "Jews" to mean Jews of Judaea.

v. 5. "If they be willing to testify, how that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Consistency with spirit of Jewish worship.

"Straitest sect of our religion," or rendered accurately, "most accurate sect of our *worship*": the Greek language makes distinction between religion and worship. The word here means outward observance of religion. S. Paul says that he was brought up and lived "according to the most accurate sect of our *external worship*": it is not a high term to apply, for it implies outwardness. There is a point of great importance about the word because it bears in it the true explanation of a beautiful and striking passage. S. James says, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world[1]." I have often heard it quoted in sermons and elsewhere, as if it meant that discern-

[1] i. 27.

ing the real principles of religion is of no importance. 'I take my stand on S. James,' someone says, '*this* is pure religion.' Not so, for the word here is that for *outward* religion: S. James says that the pure *outward religion*, the pure observance, pure undefiled worship is the perfection of love and charity which exerts itself to help others; he does not say this is the *soul* of religion. In the old religion the outer part was ritual, the inner part moral: now, S. James says, we have gone further—the outward part of Christianity is morals, the inner part is the knowledge of God; and if we look at the rest of his Epistle we shall see what he says about the knowledge of God. Coleridge points this out in the most exact manner[1]: he says the outside of Christianity may be the inside of other religions: the inside of Christianity is the communion between the soul and God. This is a digression, but it is important, if we are to try to understand from day to day what Christianity means.

Then S. Paul goes on to tell his story: I wish I could dwell word by word on it.

Notice his firmness, and the sense of power and vehemence he gives:

v. 6. "And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers;..."

The Jewish people were even now in their last days: within 12 years they were destroyed and dispersed: S. Paul bears witness to them here (*v.* 7) "unto which promise our twelve tribes" as a body, *τὸ δωδεκάφυλον*, our 'unity of twelve tribes' (it is impossible to render it in English) "earnestly serving God" 'by night as well as by day,' "hope to attain."

No latent ten tribes thought of.

In passing it is worth while to notice this for one moment, for it appears to be an answer to what one hears about ten tribes not having returned from Babylon, but being hidden away in some country. S. Paul speaks here of twelve tribes. 'I am teaching,' he says, 'the real inner force of what our twelve-tribe-body is always aiming at, but not able to reach[2].'

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, Introd. Aphorism XXIII. (p. 14, ed. 1867).

[2] But cf. on this point conjectures discussed in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim, vol. I. p. 14 ff. (ed. of 1900).

vv. 7, 8. "And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews. O King! why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?"

No *à priori* incredibility in Resurrection

In his letters and in a speech like this S. Paul takes such a great range, has such a power of throwing his arrows. Picture to yourselves the courtesy of his defence breaking out suddenly into this earnest "O King." May not this be the thought present with him? "I am a Pharisee, brought up in their most accurate sect, whose belief is in the resurrection; why is the resurrection thought a thing incredible *with you*, O King[1]?"—because the whole Herodian family was bound up with the Sadducees in all political movements. One admires here the way in which he pauses to ask this question. If the question were asked of some of us in common company, I own there might be a very good reason given for thinking it incredible, because almost all our people have such unenlightened, superstitious views of the Resurrection. It is a great thing that in our Burial Service the 15th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians is read, but it would be much greater if people in sorrow would think what it means. What can be plainer than "thou sowest not the body that shall be"; or "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption"? What can be clearer than that beautiful illustration of the grain of wheat which comes up as something totally unlike what was sown, the magnificent stalk of green, the vigorous flowers, and then the beginning of the rich lading of the ear?

if we take the Scriptural account of it.

Common superstition is incredible enough.

S. Paul tries to break the neck of the superstition: the people who hold it are overthrown by the first scoffer, who says, "If you are eaten by a lion, if you die at sea and are eaten by fishes, how do you rise?" All such objections absolutely dispose of the common doctrine of the Resurrection—that doctrine which S. Paul had not, which the Pharisees had not, nor Agrippa, though he was half a Sadducee.

I do not look with favour on cremation, but I am shocked

[1] R.V. gives a different punctuation: "the Jews, O king! Why..."

to hear Christian people argue as if burial was more conducive to the Resurrection. The very fact that you hear people argue that cremation is un-Christian because it is a kind of contradiction of the Resurrection makes one feel with a shock how far we are from the doctrine of S. Paul. If he had said to people brought up in the false doctrine of our people "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" the answer would have been "Because no one can believe it. If the particles of your body have gone into a fish, and then into another person, how will they be raised? One must give up the question." There is no answer if a man chooses to say, "According to what you believe, this body may equally well be raised as you or as another person." But if you believe that the spirit lives before God, as Christ Himself said, "the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob—God is not the God of the dead but of the living"; then if He is not the God of the dead they cannot be dead; if He is their God it is because all spirits are alive. If we believe that all spirits have, in this first life when God places them in a material world, the power of associating with themselves a vehicle by which they act in the material world; then if they are afterwards placed as we believe in circumstances of a new life, we must believe that they will associate with those new lives, by the very law of their existence, a body which shall be their own, and by which they shall live in the new world. There is no answer to that. If anyone holds this he may well say, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? why should it be thought incredible that God, who in the material world can give the spirit power to make for itself a material vehicle, should by the same law of existence, give the spirit power to take to itself another body? it is still itself after the Resurrection. It can take to itself in the new existence another vehicle, to work out the will of the Son of God in whatever world it may exist.'

But the spirit forming to itself a body wherever it is, is a fact which meets with acceptance.

After that thrust, to which the Sadducees had no *à priori* answer, S. Paul proceeds, 'I preach the Resurrection; you have nothing to say against the Resurrection. If *à priori*

there is nothing to say against it, and I produce sufficient evidence to shew that Christ was alive after the Crucifixion, there is a perfect argument for the Resurrection.' He proceeds here as in the 15th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. He goes through a good deal of the religious history of his life: and that narrative is the argument. A good many of us think that our narrative is an argument when it is not: but S. Paul's was, because it produces evidence that he had seen and spoken to One who had died; that One who was dead had spoken to him: he had seen Him alive after His passion. There was plenty of other evidence for this, that of the Apostles, or of the five hundred brethren who are mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians: but this evidence is stronger. 'I stand'—a cool man on a cool day —'and tell you that I saw Him.' No one from the beginning till now has ever accused S. Paul of being a false witness: there is no one who has read his life but has thought that he gave the best and truest evidence that he had got.

S. Paul's narrative is argument.

vv. 9, 10. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them."

This verse contains things that are not mentioned anywhere else. In the Acts there is only one martyrdom mentioned—that of Stephen: this verse makes it clear that S. Paul was concerned in others also. "Gave his vote." He had the power of voting then: "voice" in the Authorised Version means the vote of a Judge. Thus S. Paul must have been a member of the Sanhedrin, a fact which also does not appear elsewhere. "My vote against *them*." There were more deaths than Stephen's in the persecution that arose on the death of Stephen.

Early energies against his present.

v. 11. "And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I was *for compelling* them to," or "strove to make them blaspheme";—this does not mean that he succeeded in making them blaspheme—"and being exceedingly mad against them,

I persecuted them even unto foreign cities": not only to Damascus then.

Then comes the narrative of the great vision: the sentences sound so like our Lord's short utterances: our Lord's language is full of pithy, powerful sayings, and of illustrations taken from common life, like this of the stubborn ox which won't go faster—the Jewish peasant pricks it with his goad, and the ox instead of pulling harder kicks clumsily back and hurts itself. S. Paul is suddenly brought to his senses: he is thinking he is a great man charged by the priests to persecute; he finds himself suddenly blinded and is told that he is a stubborn ox that only hurts itself.

vv. 12–15. "Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Antient idea of persecution: changing conscience by pain.

We shall have to come back to some points in these verses, but before we go on let us notice one thing in which we see what Christianity has done. The antient notion of persecution has vanished from the earth, after living a long life under Christianity. It was the universal opinion of the antient world that a new belief could be established by the mere process of making men *say* that they believed. It was the theory that if you could make a man by torture declare that he disbelieved something that he believed it would stop difference of opinion. If persecution is relentless enough it does after a time make it almost impossible for a man to go on holding what he has been compelled to renounce. A man who has often retracted won't find his thoughts so comfortable that he will dwell on them. It is said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," but the religious history of Spain shews us that if persecution is

Effective; because if you change your outer life for pain, what can you do with inner life?

relentless enough opinions can be stamped out. So it was also in North Africa, under the invasions of the Vandals and the Arabs. A tax was levied on Christians, till the tax-gatherers reported that there were no more taxes because there were no more Christians.

But the idea of forming opinion by persecution has disappeared. No one in any Christian country would believe that he would commit anything but a great crime, if he said that people were to be made to believe through persecution what they did not believe.

The Language of our Lord to S. Paul.

You see the simple truthfulness with which S. Paul relates what Christ said.

vv. 16–18. "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me."

Note too the perfect simplicity with which S. Paul puts together what our Lord Himself said on the journey to Damascus, with what He said through Ananias, and in the vision in the temple (cf. ix. 5, 6, 15, 16; xxii. 21). It would have conveyed little to Agrippa if S. Paul had told him only what Christ said in the first instance. So S. Paul tells his story in short, putting intelligibly together all that was said by Christ at these various times. The narrative is, in its spirit, the perfection of truth.

vv. 19–22. "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great,

saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come."

ἐπικουρίας τυχὼν... ἕστηκα. Daily we know not how.

Notice the force with which S. Paul lights up every term; the vividness is lost both in the Authorised and Revised Versions. "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day." Turn to ourselves: how true it is of us ourselves that having obtained help of God we stand to-day, and look back on our lives, simple and unadventurous comparatively: yet we passed through, when they threatened to overwhelm us from hour to hour, from month to month: and here we stand, knowing we have the living faith, which was magnified in S. Paul a million times: he had his life in his hand from moment to moment. "Help from God." The word for "help" is much older than S. Paul's time; it is the word by which allies were called in Homer. S. Paul says, 'as a soldier, from moment to moment in peril, from moment to moment I received *alliance* of God, and here I stand': "saying nothing but what the prophets did say should come—and Moses," he adds. Why does he add "and Moses"? Agrippa did not believe the prophets, or, because of his Sadducean tendencies, S. Paul was not sure that he did; so he said, "the prophets—and Moses," because the Sadducees were compelled to accede to this by their own views. The sentence sounds as if a shorthand writer had written it, for by itself it is upside down, out of joint; but it is comprehensible if we see the argument. Then he just catches up the argument by a delicate touch.

v. 23. "*Whether* the Christ must suffer, and *whether* He first by the Resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles."

This way of putting the question was one of the ordinary forms of discussion[1]. There were many Jews who believed that the Christ could not suffer, and that our Lord could therefore be Christ: and considering the 53rd chapter of Isaiah some came to the conclusion that there were two Christs, one the divine son of David, and the other the

[1] The translators have turned the sentence differently to make it more intelligible: "How that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first...should proclaim light..."

suffering Christ; as S. Paul says, Christ's sufferings were a stumbling-block to the Jews. One of the discussions therefore in the schools was, '*whether* the Christ should suffer': as one of the questions of Socrates is 'Virtue—*whether* it is a thing that can be taught.' Another such question was 'whether the Messiah should be the first that should rise from the dead.' And again 'whether the passion described by Isaiah referred to the Messiah.' S. Paul is telling all this to one who is familiar with and proficient in all questions of Jewish theology: he does not say that he preached *that* Christ should suffer, but that he preached on the school question *whether* Christ should suffer. Questions in professional form.

v. 24. "And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness." The Roman's Impression.

"A loud voice," what a characteristic touch of the Roman, the man who wrote that must have been present. "Paul, thou art mad." 'These old scriptures, these many writings, are (literally) *whirling thee round into mania*.'

Paul had had difficulties before with the Jews and priests, for they had an animus against him; but now that he is in touch with his audience he never forgets courtesy; and here, rebelling against this shot from the platform, he gives Festus his title "most excellent." The Prisoner's Courtesy.

vv. 25, 26. "But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the King knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner."

Agrippa with all his knowledge of the Jews knows well what has been going on.

v. 27. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" a bold venture, "I know that thou believest." Promptitude.

What reason had he for knowing? I do not know, but he did believe that Agrippa was not so much of a Sadducee that he did not believe the prophets: and if he believed the antient prophecies he would be ready to go further. But it did not suit Agrippa to go further.

We are sorry to have to part here with what has become a fine word in our own language: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"; for what the speech means really is, 'You are making short work of persuading me to be a Christian'; as the Revised Version has it (*v.* 28), "And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." 'I see you have got a compendious method of your own, I see how you are going to proceed: I am not going to follow you.'

'Christian' was a great word of reproach: Agrippa, with Festus sitting by him, is rather alarmed at S. Paul's direct appeal, 'What is to become of it if I am to be appealed to—if I follow up the prophets? I can't have that.'

v. 29. "In little"—S. Paul repeats the word Agrippa used—'In little and in much I should pray to God that not you only but also all that hear me this day may be as I am,' and then as with a kindly irony he held up his chain—"except these bonds."

We have here a beautiful dramatic scene from the middle of a Roman Court. Festus, with his loud rough burst, "Thou art mad"; and the answer, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus." Then the appeal, "King Agrippa," and the answer, 'You are making short work with me.' 'Short work or long work I pray that not only thou but all that hear me might become such as I am,' then the little delicate reproach, 'except these chains.'

vv. 30–32. "And the King rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

The whole scene is so dramatic; the King and Queen rise up and the magistrates are consulted and come to the conclusion that there is no reason for his condemnation, no reason why he should not be set at liberty; only Paul has settled this matter for himself when his last trial was held before Felix. He had been in prison for two years, and no

step forward had been made by the Providence of God for two years. The document which was now drawn up might have been drawn up two years ago: Felix might have got an expert to settle the matter. Felix had been uncomfortable, yet his avarice kept S. Paul there. Now after two years Paul made a step forward.

So now the Document can be drawn. A step of Providence after two years. No hurry.

Yet his mission while he had been kept at Caesarea these two whole years had advanced: during this imprisonment there had been rumours of Paul the prisoner.

Does not that speak to us? We know that we have an important purpose that we want to carry out, yet we wake every morning, go to sleep every night restless and unhappy because those who could, will not do that important work: they are standing idle. 'I have done all I can. Has God some evil will at Zion? Is it some secret sin which makes such persons impenetrable, or something wrong in the cause?' S. Paul woke to the same situation day after day for two years: he had no such thoughts as these, for he committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously: he was not murmuring against God, nor trying to make out that things which he himself had rightly done must be wrong; he had no despondency either of himself or his cause. The great God moves so quietly in creation, working all out in time: and He would have us without vexation, without hurry, do the same.

S. Paul was burning to be at Rome. The first night after he was made prisoner Christ had told him "thou must bear witness of me also at Rome." There the great point of his doctrine was brought out and preached—justification by faith: he was burning to be in contact with Western civilisation; he knew what he had to give. And all this time he was kept by the sea-side in a dull, lonely prison, with a soldier always at his side. He did not say to his own heart that because the good things that he wished for did not come to pass as fast as he could wish they must be unimportant; but he kept to God, and committed himself to Him. Now at last the letter was written and the ship chosen.

The appeal about the Resurrection came in strikingly.

Deep Spiritual lesson. As before Felix "Conscience" and "Exercise."

So before Agrippa—Light on Conversion.

Was it strange, if before the heathen Felix the most stirring passages had been about conscience? There is another such appeal before Agrippa, the fullest account of conversion in the light of the Resurrection. This is what is to happen to them and to us—'to turn and be converted from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.' The word "conversion" means moving round; it is not often used now except of the conversion of the heathen, but Wesley and his followers were the most constant preachers of conversion, and there are several passages in Wesley's sermons in which he warns his followers that it is seldom used in the New Testament in the way in which many of them use it.

Not common term in New Testament.

Necessity of conversion for those who get Ethnic, Heathenish.

But if conversion is necessary for the heathen, it is necessary for us if we get into a heathenish state, or a habit of mind which is no better than a heathenish habit of mind. If we get into heathenish ways of forgetting God and not seeing His Hand and cross marked over all: if we are not remembering that the world will all be burnt up, and that we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ, to be judged of what we have done in the world, whether it be good or whether it be evil: if we forget Christ, not in such a way as to deny Him, but so as to go on without letting any of the things that we believe take their place among the realities of our life, we are slipping at any rate into the state of a good heathen. If we have been habitually dominated by the faults of our youth, and pursued them into manhood, then we shall find when middle-age comes, that we have still to say, 'the faults which came to me then come still, my temper and appetite and want of self-restraint, and ambition of this world's good, and envy: I remember them years ago, and here they are still.' The magic of Christ's blood has not wrought in us as it ought: the power of the Spirit has not moulded us: what are we, if Christ, if the unction of the Holy Spirit, is not in us? What can we say of the passage in S. John's Epistle which says that the sons of God cannot commit sin[1]? We don't know what it means. What do we need but conversion?

[1] 1 Jo. v. 18.

Conversion precedes Regeneration for adult converts,

It is no answer to say we were baptized: yes, we were: there is nothing in the Epistle to the Romans about faith and justification stronger than the assertion that we were new-born in baptism. S. Paul was converted: he did turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. He was turned round from that moment, he was baptized and born again as a child of God: he was not freed from falling, but a spiritual alteration in his standing before God had taken place. Suppose now such a man should put three grains of incense on the altar before Jupiter; though it is an external act, he would be sliding back: but to offer incense is not sliding back more than to fall into other sins. If a man slips back into the old position he must be converted once more, must turn from the power of Satan, which had embraced him again, to God. So also he must be converted again if he was baptized in infancy.

but may need to be repeated after it,

and must be so for a child baptized.

It is not a difficulty to intellectual minds that the power of the Holy Spirit can be unconscious in the child, just as the power of life is; the power of life in a child is much stronger than in us who are hastening to the grave: but it is unconscious, as sin is, in the child. If you take a rose-bud and dissect it you will find there all the parts of a perfect rose —stamens, pistil, calyx, closely folded and not yet coloured with beauty, but all there; so there are present in a child the dormant powers of life and of sin, for it appears before the child could have learnt it from the outside: you see anger forming the features in a way you know well; you know that there is sin in the child only waiting to be developed; and we have confidence that so too the life of God is given to the child, the power of God which can develope in him. But that does not contradict the possibility that the power of sin may develope faster, and harden the heart against the power of the Holy Ghost: may check the development from day to day of the power of God in him, until the moment when some sorrow perhaps affects the soul. Then such a soul must be again converted, and regenerated, a change must come in its spiritual standing before God: for conversion is a moral change of disposition.

Conversion a moral change of Disposition.

An act of will required.

Let us question ourselves: Do we find that we need conversion? If so, remember, 'Whereupon I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.'

Three steps are required:—

Metanoia.

1st. Repentance from the old sin.

Conversion—Faith necessary.

2nd. Faith towards Christ so that He can convert us.

Worthy action.

3rd. We must choose not to be "disobedient to the heavenly vision." Let us do so by more worthy actions. Repentance is the change of mind, its conversion to God, the tides of the mind setting towards Him. Resolute purpose, then, and acts worthy of the change are required. But there is one more danger we must regard, if we consider whether we need conversion.

Say for instance that we have a hot temper: as years go on, God perhaps has kept us from falling, we think all danger has passed away, and that sinning is impossible, incredible. But if we seek the truth we must know and learn whether the old evil has passed away only because of the lapse of time and the increase of years; or whether perhaps we have substituted for it something which is less violent but more dreadful. I say more dreadful, for if one regards with more horror the sins of early passion, one regards with more terror the sins of avarice. Passion does not so destroy and contract the soul as avarice. We know how some have passed from one to the other, so that while they correct the one they become the slaves of the other. The old sins are not off our hands, we haven't cured them. We might say "the tree was quite a different thing in Spring when it had flowers pleasing to the eye but bitter and sharp in taste and now in Autumn when the flowers are gone and it bears rich fruit: it is a new tree changed from what it was when it was young." But it is not really changed, any more than there is really a change when the passion of youth becomes meanness and pride in age. We may know from the last, closing speech of S. Paul whether we ought to be as well satisfied with our position in the world as he was when, though in an awful delusion, he believed himself to be executing the will of God on the wretched Christians whom he was persecuting. We may be misinter-

preting the extraordinary change that has passed over us since we were young, we may need conversion as much as ever. The Holy Spirit will come to us and will give us power to work out His will, if we will give ourselves to Him with utter and complete self-surrender. If one could only express the difference there would be. It seems so dreadful that we are so little able to turn distinctly round, to place ourselves before God and to determine that we will cure our propensities by using His power, by bringing Him into our souls. By asking Him to 'abolish,' as in baptism He said He would, 'the old man and utterly destroy the whole body of sin.' It can be done, God help us all, in accordance with S. Paul's teaching[1].

[1] A note which there was evidently no time to work out remains: 'Cf. The Foundation, Heb. vi. 1.' This was one of the passages appointed to be read at Confirmations in Cornwall; and the Archbishop had probably intended to comment as in some of his Confirmation addresses on the connection of "repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God" (*v.* 1), and "the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands" (*v.* 2).

LIV.

May 5th, 1892.

Voyage to Rome.

Acts xxvii.

5. Change of plan at Myra. 'Corn-ship.'

Details shew accuracy and good seamanship.

Human interest. Centurion. Crew. Guard.

Apostle's interest in life of ship, and in work, 19. (Sites, winds, soundings, food.) Not 'detached'; not a *rôle*. His Eucharist, unknown to them, 35.

Infectious courage, 36. Coolness, 21. 'Bodily presence weak, &c.' Earnestness and certainties.

Parables.

'Stay in the ship,' 31.

'Some on boards, some on broken pieces,' 45.

A Eucharist in the common meal, 35.

This twenty-seventh chapter, the history of the shipwreck, is full of the most intense interest. Every investigation made in archaeology or navigation has made more pointed the keen, lucid description. The points of interest are too numerous for me to go through; I will touch a few of the most remarkable. Then we will turn to what we seek for, of more human interest—human and divine.

All the trials and hearings are over, the two years have come to an end; it is determined that S. Paul shall go to Italy, for the appeal must be heard at Rome. Other prisoners were also being sent to Rome: and they were committed to an officer, Julius of the Augustan band; this band has its name from Augustus. Julius was going to return; he was a very proper person to take charge of the prisoners. It was their

intention to sail north, in the usual way, up to Asia Minor; then west, then north again through the Levant, or Aegean, until they would come to Thessalonica; then to go overland down to Dyrrhachium, a city of what is to-day the principality of Montenegro, then across to Brindisi, and from Brindisi to Rome; thus keeping as much under the land as they could, coasting along the shores.

xxvii. *vv.* 1–5. "And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia."

But here they changed their plans.

Change of plan at Myra.

v. 6. "And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein."

Corn-ship.

The "ship of Alexandria" means a great corn-ship, for the ships of Alexandria carried all the cereal wealth of Rome. Rome, with its large population was dependent on foreign countries for its corn, which came to it from Alexandria, and the North of Africa generally, and from Sicily. It has been calculated that there were many more vessels in the port of Rome than in the port of London: for the ships were not large in comparison with the amount that had to be imported. We are told in the course of the shipwreck that they *threw out corn*, though nothing has been said before about it being a corn-ship. Here is another trait of a true writer, which it would be impossible to forge. The ship was large because we find that besides the corn there were 276 persons on board. The centurion determined to embark in this as he could go straight with his prisoners to Rome. He hoped that being a bigger vessel it would be better able to weather

the stormy direct passage. They changed then from the first to the second vessel, and went west, but met the most trying wind of the Mediterranean. They could not sail straight, but ran under Crete, which lies at the bottom of the Levant, and came to a port which still bears the same name, consisting of two Greek words meaning the 'Fair Havens'; here they put in, in desperation, as the hurricane was still increasing, and it was fast approaching the time when the Mediterranean was supposed to be closed. The Rabbis considered the Mediterranean open from the Feast of Pentecost to the Feast of Tabernacles; from Whitsuntide, that is, to the end of September[1]. We know what time this was because it says that "the Fast" was already past, and the Fast was the Day of Atonement, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles; that is, the 24th of September. This coincides with what we know from profane sources, that the sea was supposed to be closed about the end of September; afterwards when the art of navigation had improved it was considered open until the 1st of November.

Season getting late.

v. 7–11. "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone; and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul."

Details shew accuracy of whole, and good seamanship.

The safe course to pursue now would have been what S. Paul recommended. He had had much experience of the sea,—had been three times shipwrecked already[2]; and probably no one on board had had more adventures on the sea

[1] *Life and Epistles of S. Paul*, vol. II. p. 192, note 29.

[2] 2 Cor. xi. 25.

than he. His advice was to winter the vessel, as they were often obliged to do. But the harbour was not good; and there was a much better one, Phoenice, a few miles away. S. Paul's advice was that they should stay in the harbour where they were in spite of its inconveniences; but it was decided that if they did winter, they would do it in the more convenient place.

v. 12. "And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east[1]."

So when they had a favourable wind they tried to go along to Phoenice by the coast, when down came the gale. In the correct translation this is more clear than in the Authorised English Version.

vv. 13, 14. "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor, and sailed along Crete close in shore. But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind which is called Euraquilo"—the north-east wind. It dropped down on them over the crest of the mountains, and beat them out to sea. Then as the wind blew with great fury there was a new danger—that they might be driven out of their course, into the Greater Syrtis, which indeed in modern times is not dangerous, but requires great care. But by the help of Providence they escaped that, and drove along in the way that is so graphically described.

vv. 15–17. "And when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven."

They 'made the ship snug, scudding along under bare poles' as we should say now.

There is a most interesting book, written by a great

[1] Gr. *down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind.*

master of navigation, Captain Smith[1], who made it his business to go over this water and verify every fact about the voyage. The account here excites the admiration of naval men, not only by the description of the dangers, but by the skill with which they were met.

vv. 18, 19. "And as we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard; and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship."

There is a new point found out here, a point in which the Revised Version is wrong, "they cast out...the tackling of the ship" (*v.* 19). I believe any navigator would say that this was a mistake, that to cast out the tackling was very bad management, so freight has been inserted by the translators in *v.* 18, and 'furniture' suggested as an alternative in *v.* 19.

But what was really done was as follows: when the air was very thick so that they could not steer (for having no compass they could only steer by the sun, moon and stars, which now they could not see), it was very necessary to retard the speed of the ship. What was done was to make a monstrous bundle of everything that could be spared, to fasten it up in a sail, and throw it out with two cables—to make a "sea-anchor" as it is called. This, dragging along, retards the pace of the ship. Thus "the freight" was not thrown overboard one day, and the tackling thrown out the next; but anything that could be spared was made into "an outcast." *v.* 18, 'The next day they were making for themselves an ἐκβολή,' or "outcast," and it was probably this huge bundle that was thrown out the third day. There are one or two little points we have passed over:—difficulties about the hoisting of the boat, and the "helps under-girding the ship." This latter plan is still carried out sometimes.

vv. 20–26. "And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. And when

[1] *The Voyage and Shipwreck of S. Paul, with dissertation on the sources of the writings of S. Luke, and the ships and navigation of the antients*, by James Smith, of Jordan Hill. London, 1848.

they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

We will come back afterwards to comment on what S. Paul did and said.

v. 27. "But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country."

This must seem difficult to anyone looking at the modern maps; but antiently "Adria" was the name of the sea all across to Africa, very far south of what we call now "The Adriatic."

"At midnight." In stories of shipwreck one hears of people feeling, when it is impossible to see clearly, that they are approaching the land.

vv. 28, 29. "And they sounded, and found twenty fathoms: and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day."

Ships often carried as many as four anchors—they were not often cast out of the stern, but from the prow; as when trying to escape, the sailors pretended they were going to cast anchors out of the prow. The object now was to keep in the clear sea, and prevent running on land. If they had cast anchors from the prow the running sea might carry the ship near to the land. In the same way Nelson cast anchors from the stern at the Battle of the Nile[1].

[1] *The Voyage and Shipwreck of S. Paul*, ed. 1880, p. 133.

vv. 30, 31. "And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Here we see S. Paul's thoughtfulness—'What are the soldiers and prisoners, landsmen, to do if the sailors go?' Or possibly he may say this on information he had in his vision.

vv. 32, 33. "Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing."

"Nothing," is probably used as we should use it, meaning very insufficient food.

v. 34. "Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you."

Here again we see that he has light from above.

v. 35. "And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat."

He made their meal his Eucharist, but they did not know.

"He brake it." In the New Testament the word "breaking" is only used in reference to that one thing. What was to the rest a common meal was, unknown to them, S. Paul's Eucharist. The word for "giving thanks" is εὐχαριστεῖν.

vv. 36–39. "Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it."

They saw the shingle and sand and the sea raging between. The only chance was that the ship should be lightened sufficiently to run on the top of the waves—so they cast off the anchors and (*v.* 40) "loosed the bands of the rudders." The ships were steered not by a single rudder but by two

oars which came out of the side of the ship, in front of the stern. When the ship was in great danger the rudders were more harm than good; and they had been tied up out of the sea. Now they want to resume charge of the vessel, so they cast out the anchors, and loose the bands of the rudders.

v. 40. "And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach."

"Hoisting up the foresail" so as to keep the ship's head to the land. We know the exact place which they were so happy as to come upon, where two currents met.

vv. 41–43. "But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground: and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land."

"Desirous to save Paul." We see now the impression he had produced gradually on the mind of the officer. The Romans cared very little for life, but this Roman could not part with Paul.

"Those which could swim." You see the military order, to dive and "get first to the land" so as to be able to help others.

v. 44. "And the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land."

Human interest the main interest. Not limited to S. Paul.

Let us turn now to the human interest of this: it would not be according to the Christian idea if all our interest were limited to S. Paul; it is by no means limited to him.

The centurion's thought—φιλανθρώπως.

First notice the way in which S. Luke touches on the kindliness of the centurion. When they touched at Sidon where there were Christians, S. Paul needs a little friendliness, Julius treated Paul "kindly" and permitted him to go to his friends, and receive attention; so that he might be equipped

for such a voyage. The word rendered "kindly" is here φιλανθρώπως, 'like a lover of men,' not 'courteously' as it is in the Authorised Version.

φιλανθρωπία is used in the Bible as an attribute of God; it comes in the lesson for Christmas Day, "the kindness of God our Saviour[1]." The Apostle does not hesitate here to ascribe to a heathen the love of man which is characteristic of God. This is an answer to those who hold that there is no hope for those men who have no knowledge of our Lord. That belief is passing away now, though many of us can remember the time when it was common; that it does not rest on authority of the Bible is touchingly brought out here.

But reliance on business men at present more than Paul. A change.

For all this, the centurion relies rather on the business men than on S. Paul. S. Paul gives the best advice about wintering, but the centurion considers him not a professional man. Look at the change the voyage makes, the soldiers themselves take S. Paul's advice not long after, and when he says the sailors must not be allowed to take the boat away, the soldiers cut it off. They trust S. Paul more than the master of the ship.

The sailors.

There are two things here that we contrast with horror with what happens on a Christian ship. What would happen now if we heard that the crew had tried to save themselves? You all know a most glorious instance where the soldiers put the women and children into the boats, and the last thing heard as they went down was "God save the Queen." But we cannot picture to ourselves the horror of the condition of the rowers on a craft such as this, outside the ship, with a bar only to rest on, pulling the oars there night and day, washed by the sea, de-humanised. There is no touch of humanity about them. When they saw a chance of saving themselves they would leave the rest to their fate. Here there is a great social lesson for us; if our sailors are our pride it is their treatment that has made them so. What made these men dangerous as a class was the misery in which they lived. This is a lesson to our time; we do not know how far Anarchy began with Anarchists.

[1] Tit. iii. 4.

When they were safe, or nearly so, for the currents would land them on the land, the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners. That horror is impossible with us; but in the antient world the soldier who allowed a prisoner to escape was certain to be put to death. Ignatius describes the soldiers who took him to Rome, the same kind of men as those who guarded S. Paul, as 'leopards' for their fierceness[1]. If the fear of death would not restrain the group of soldiers from trying to kill their prisoners, the centurion takes it on himself to prevent them.

The soldiers.

The human interest gets deeper when we think of S. Paul. What almost surprises us is the simplicity and naturalness of everything said by S. Paul. There is no posing, no assuming a prophetic position. The moment when he can tell about the vision he does so.

Realise what he says about himself, "His letters are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible[2]." What he says of his presence cannot be an exaggeration because of the other clause about his letters. He is described from tradition as being a small old man, bald, with a capacious forehead, and with a beard. Some of the earliest glass shews traditional heads of S. Peter and S. Paul which bear out this description[3]. Thus it was only gradually he got this influence; for he was no person with a majestic mien, who assumed for himself a position.

Not some majestic personage, but 'bodily presence weak, speech contemptible.'

Notice the interest which he and S. Luke, not professional navigators, take in all the details of the voyage—details which excite the admiration of navigators: the lie of the harbour (*v.* 12); the three winds (*vv.* 12, 13); the accurate acquaintance with the course and incidents of the voyage; the Syrtis; the helps under the ship; putting up the foresail, tying and letting loose the rudders, the place where two seas met, the soundings.

The Apostle's keen interest in the life of the Ship—in all details.

Then notice S. Paul's care for food for the soldiers and sailors—food is their health, so they must not neglect their

[1] Ignat. *Rom.* v.

[2] 2 Cor. x. 10.

[3] Cf. the specimen in the British Museum.

meals; his foresight, his quiet, infectious courage, so real, so unpretending.

Let us, as religious people, say to ourselves, 'This is the way the religion of S. Paul shews itself.' He didn't make himself a 'detached person,' he was in every detail, not retiring to read a book of devotions in a corner, drawing attention to himself. This taking food, getting the poor fellows to a meal, taking it himself to encourage them, was no *rôle*, no secondary matter for the sake of producing a good impression and making the discipleship of Christ a marked thing, but he cared for their comfort and help. This is like the point we dwelt on before, that when our Lord raised Jairus' daughter, the first thing He did was not to excite the father and mother to a religious ecstasy, but to say, 'Give her something to eat.'

Not 'detached.'

Not a *rôle*.

These are lessons that, while we are trying to live, as I trust we are, above the world, we should not live in the world as if religion separated us from it, but should fill it with holiness and love, and unselfish thought for others, instead of letting our thoughts play round ourselves. How wide the sympathies are which are engaged in the Acts—in the city, in the villages, in the country, all described with the hand of a master, one who touches admirably the Court, and the prisons; no Tacitus could have dealt more delicately than S. Luke with the characters of the people we read about before Easter[1], with the custom-house, the sects and their peculiarities; the house of death, and now the ship. Everywhere the Christian's true part is not to shut himself up and look down with compassion on the poor crowd below, but to try to make himself one with them. Think of the 276 soldiers and sailors and the despised prisoner; the simplicity of the man gives him strength.

Sympathies.

The simplicity.

'Praying that the day might come' (*v.* 29). It doesn't say that S. Paul prayed: if he prayed with regard to the shipwreck there is no doubt what his prayer was for. We can guess, because he says (*v.* 21), "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss." Why say that? Is he throwing it in

[1] pp. 537—621.

their teeth that they did not do what he said? Clearly not, but he wants them to do something now, and makes them feel that if he was right before that is a reason for trusting him this time—'I want you to keep up your spirits.' (*v.* 22) "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship."

The infectious courage, the coolness.

'How do I know this?' (*vv.* 23, 24). "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." There is one lesson there, the certainty of angelic custody, the certainty of what we say in the Collect of Michaelmas Day—we should use it oftener in our devotions. There is no question that S. Paul was clear that God kept him, and helped him by angels.

Angel presence was certain to him.

"Before Caesar."—Notice the confidence. S. Paul is sure he is going to be heard by Caesar, he is sure he will get to Rome, he has no fears. When God told Abraham to comply with the ritual of the Syrians, and to slay his son he was ready to do it, he was sure there was some deliverance, for God had said that in that son all the nations of the earth should be blessed. So here, S. Paul knew God's will though no one else on the ship believed anything of the kind.

God's purpose was certain to him.

Now what was his prayer for? Not to be relieved after the horror of the darkness, to be fed; he was on an undecked ship, always wet through, but he prayed to be delivered from none of these things; but "lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." That is what he had prayed for—as he knew that he should go to Rome, that he might not go alone —that all these poor creatures might be saved.

"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me" (*v.* 25). He knew not how—he had just that glimpse.

"Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island" (*v.* 26). That touch would give confidence. He threw it in as a little certainty which would make vivid his assurances.

It has often been said that this is truly a parable; the ship is the perfect image of the Church. When the days are

This ship is also like the Church.

(1) If these don't stay in the ship you can't be saved.

dark let us be sure that we know God's purpose is that they who sail with us shall be brought to land. We must be sure that God is going to work out His purposes. Faith has often failed, great men have passed from among us having ceased to believe in God's great Church in England; they went off and would not abide with us.

Wesley's followers.

A hundred years ago John Wesley's faith failed; he had worked for years that two bishops might be sent out to America, the true Church given to that great country. For political reasons and on account of legal difficulties the Government would not stir in the matter; it was all that the Church could do at this time to retain Episcopal Government. At the last Wesley, who had worked for years that the Church might retain Episcopal Government, and having no right to do it because he was a presbyter, laid hands on two good men and sent them that they might do the part of organization of the Church. That action has borne this fruit in America, that the Episcopal Church which we believe to be the true Church is comparatively small, though influential; but the Church that calls itself Episcopal (inheriting Episcopal jurisdiction from a presbyter who had no right to make bishops) is a most numerous and dominant body, having only a pretence of Episcopal organization.

John Wesley's faith failed. He took it upon himself to do this in September 1784; by the middle of November that same year the difficulties had been suddenly overcome, and a truly consecrated bishop was on his way to America[1].

J. H. Newman and others ship off by themselves.

"Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." The loss to the English Church was enormous, inestimable, when another good man's faith failed, and he refused to abide in the ship.

(2) Some on boards and some on broken pieces.

'Some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship.' This is a parable again. It has been broken into an immense number of dissenting sects. It is woeful that instead of being the Ark of God, sailing on nobly and beautifully, it should be

[1] Bishop Seabury; cf. the Sermon preached by the Archbishop in S. Paul's on the *Seabury Commemoration*. London, 1884.

so broken up. If there is any touch of a parable here let us remember that as individuals, though only on broken pieces, they did all come safe to land.

(3) We too can make the world's meal our Eucharist.

Then there is a wonderful piece of teaching. While the rest of the world took their meal S. Paul took the Eucharist; he called the rest about him that they might take the meal necessary for strength, and he with an inner consciousness of what he was doing, and Who it was that had commanded it, took bread and gave thanks and brake it.

Some of us mourn that religious sympathies are less than we desire; we would that those around us shared our spirit, that they sympathised in our own desire for discipline, for self-regulation; let us rather desire to do our duty in the way S. Luke and S. Paul did, entering into everything that was going on around them, yet holy to the Lord. S. Paul had his Eucharist at no sweet, quiet altar covered with a white cloth, with a long prayer commending all degrees of men and all who suffer to God, reciting the last scene and imploring our Heavenly Father to give us His Son's Flesh and Blood. It was on the wet board with spray dashing over the mouldy bread, with a drop of sour wine, that S. Paul had a perfect Eucharist. Although we are not surrounded by the happy circumstances of religion, in which we would fain live, if hearts are not with us, if the spiritual wine is the wine of sorrow, yet still offer it in simplicity to God; He will bless it. While others take their meal they will be inspired with the infection of your courage, though they do not understand it. Simply offer that which you have; be sure He will make it to your souls the perfect Heavenly food. If He can make bread and wine to be His Son's Body and Blood, little things which detract from the sweetness of the bread and purity of the wine are no interference at all.

LV.

May 18th, 1892.

The Journey to Rome.

Acts xxviii. 1–15.

Wrecked and saved. "A certain island" realised.—"Barbarous."

The Adder in the Heather.

'Murderer or god.'—Basis of much jurisprudence and mythology. The Kingdom of God come with healing.

The new start and the rest of the journey to the Bay of Naples and on past the Pontine Marshes.—The Appian Way. Christians at Puteoli and from Rome.

Two points of coincidence: *v.* 7, The 'First man' of the Island. *vv.* 8, 9, The medical author.

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15. 'Took courage'; revelation of effort and strain.

The effect of adverse circumstances on faith.

The burden of 'supernatural' gifts.

Sense of God's nearness to man, man's distance from God.

Tradition of Publius.

'Take courage.'

We will go quickly through the first part of the chapter; you will remember that we ended last time with the description of the ways in which those on the ship reached the shore. S. Luke's description makes us able to identify the spot with absolute certainty, and the soundings given are those of our Admiralty Chart at present.

v. 1. "And when we were escaped, then we recognised that the island was called Melita."

Some of the crew had no doubt been there before, and recognised the creek. S. Paul's Bay lies on the north-west of Malta, with the small island of Salmonetta opposite, connected originally with the main island; below Salmonetta a stream rushes out from Malta, and the sea runs in a strong tide or "race" between the two, and sweeps into the creek where the two seas meeting drove the ship onwards till her bows were imbedded in the mudbank and stuck fast, and the stern was broken up by the on-coming waves. We can picture the landing in the grey morning, with a cold rain falling and bitter wind blowing as the 276 men came diving, swimming, clinging to wreckage, half-drowned, to the land they had longed for.

They would realise his prediction of "a certain island."

The two seas.

The old town of the island, now called Civita Vecchia, is about five miles from the creek, and the people came down to the shore.

v. 2. "And the barbarians shewed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

'Barbarians' does not mean barbarous people, but was merely the designation of those who were neither Greeks nor Romans. These people were civilized people, descendants of the Phoenicians who had colonised Melita. "They shewed no common kindness," or rather "no casual philanthropy," but set to work to kindle a fire to dry them; and a fire large enough to warm and dry two hundred and seventy-six shipwrecked people is no small matter.

"No casual philanthropy."

v. 3. "But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand."

We see that S. Paul was at work at once gathering his bundle of sticks to lay on the fire; even if his help was not needed he could not look on but must take his share. The absence of large trees in Malta and the scarcity of wood seem to make the possibility of so great a fire at first doubtful; but Malta produces a kind of thorny heather which is even now piled in stacks like faggots. Out of this heather came the viper and fastened on S. Paul's hand. A difficulty has been made

of the fact that vipers are not found now in Malta: it would be surprising if they were, for the island is now thickly populated—1200 people to the square mile.

v. 4. "And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live."

At once the people thought that Divine justice was asserting itself to punish some past crime. It is curious that there is a beautiful old Greek Epigram on just such an incident, on a man who died where S. Paul lived. One may translate it:

> "The adder struck. How vain his sea-tost toil,
> With that land-vengeance owing all the while[1]!"

This seemed about to be fulfilled in S. Paul's case.

v. 5. "Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm."

You will remember that in the end of S. Mark's Gospel,—in those few verses which, though evidently antient, seem to bear the trace of another hand and to be rather a report of S. Mark's account, than actually his own writing—there are the words, "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them[2]." S. Paul may have heard these words of our Lord from S. Mark himself, and have shaken off the viper with no anxiety.

v. 6. "But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god."

A hush of expectation must have settled down over the crowd as the people watched to see the swelling which was one effect of the poison, or the sudden death of the man who had been bitten; but the expectation passed into an outburst of excitement as they said that he was a god—the exact reverse

[1] ἔκτανέ λυγρὸς ἔχις. τὶ μάτην πρὸς κύματ' ἐμόχθει
τὴν ἐπὶ γῆς φεύγων μοῖραν ὀφειλομένην.
Statyllius Flaccus, *Anthol. Graec.* VII. 290 (ed. Tauchn.).

[2] Mark xvi. 18.

of what had happened at Lystra, where he dropped at once in the estimation of the populace from a god to an outcast. Whole systems of jurisprudence and mythology have been built on this principle. This first superstitious impulse of the islanders has its basis in that same idea which issued in trials by ordeal of witchcraft; it comes from an unthinking judgment according to outward appearance, which is by no means banished from the world. If the adder kills him, he must be guilty; if it does not, he must be divine. To hold him as a god because he had escaped was as reasonable as to esteem him a murderer if he had died,—and more abhorrent to S. Paul. As quickly as they turned, people will turn now, on a plea as foolish, popular, and fashionable.

It must be noticed that Asclepios, the god of healing, was worshipped in Melita. A representation of this god has been discovered in the sister colony of Carthage, a noble, elderly figure of a man with long hair and beard and a flowing robe; he leans against a stem up which a serpent is crawling. In Melita itself representations of Apollo have been found with similar accessories.

v. 7. "Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the first man of the island, named Publius" (his estate, or the farms from which he drew his supplies), "who received us, and entertained us three days courteously."

"Courteously"—or literally "with a friendly mind"; here again is this spirit shewn in a man who had no revelation from God, but yet was one of those who, as S. Paul says in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "having no law are a law unto themselves[1]."

The enthusiasm of the Apostle rises all through this chapter as he draws out the dealings of God with His creatures, who, by the voice of God in their hearts aspire towards Him; no creature can escape some form of judgment from God—"tribulation and anguish, upon *every* soul of man that worketh evil," Jew or Gentile; but also "glory,

[1] Rom. ii. 14.

and honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew, and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God," all who do His will to the best of their knowledge and ability are alike before Him. How S. Paul must have recognised this spirit in the people of Melita, and rejoiced to feel that God was working among them, when he saw no 'casual philanthropy' of the 'barbarians,' and marked the 'friendly mind' of Publius in receiving them. So ought we to rejoice over the kindness of heathen souls.

vv. 8–11. "And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and were cured: who also honoured us with many honours; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

"And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers."

The Kingdom of God come—its effects.

This was a time of rest and spiritual refreshment to S. Paul as he ministered by the bedside of the elder Publius and to the sick on the island, while this other corn-ship of Alexandria was wintering in the island, pursuing the very course which Paul had wished to pursue in wintering in Crete.

The Twin Brothers, or Dioscuri, the sons of Jupiter, were the patrons of sailors, and were supposed to manifest themselves in the electric glow which is seen sometimes at the top of the mast.

vv. 12, 13. "And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli."

Puteoli—the port for landing corn.

Rhegium and Puteoli were from their position the natural ports to touch at on the way to Rome. The delay at Syracuse and the circuit made are explained by the note of welcome in the mention of the south wind. Puteoli, now called Pozzuoli, is adjoining the Bay of Naples, and was a great port at this time where the corn-ships bringing cargoes from Sicily

or Alexandria might unlade; you can still see the great pier and harbour. Italy did not grow the greater part of her own corn, for the small freehold farms had been swallowed up and the land was held in great estates; the government had adopted the dangerous plan of giving daily bread in Rome, and encouraged thereby an increasing throng of idlers. If the storms of winter were prolonged Rome might be brought to the verge of starvation: then the anxiety and excitement about the arrival of the corn-ships was very great. Seneca describes how crowds flocked to see their arrival, how the people knocked each other down in their excitement as the ships appeared and were recognized at once, for among their special privileges the corn-ships were exempted from the order to lower their top-sails on entering a port. These people welcomed specially the first arrival in the spring, knowing that the fleet would follow.

The favouring south wind enabled the Castor and Pollux to make good way to Puteoli—182 miles in about 24 hours—which it might well do with a favouring wind; and S. Paul found, sooner than he expected, that the terrible voyage was ended, and landed to find himself among brethren, probably an unexpected joy, for the existence of these little groups of Christians, who clung together, shewed that the word of God was spreading through the world, further than he had known; and here for seven days the brethren were allowed by the friendly and humane centurion to minister to Paul. There was opportunity for the exchange of spiritual sympathy, and the seven days may have included two Sundays.

v. 14. ..."Where we found brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome."

And "so"—with the comfort of this unexpected joy—they came to Rome; "so"—along the great Appian Way which figures in so many descriptions of journeys to and from Rome[1],—triumphal processions returning, the Proconsuls going out to their provinces with their array of soldiers and the vessels of gold.

The road from Puteoli to Rome divided into two at the

[1] *e.g.* Horace, *Sat.* I. 5. 4; cf. p. 304.

edge of the Pontine Marshes; one way skirted the marshes, the other ran parallel to a canal that crossed them. These two branches met again at Appii Forum, about forty miles from Rome. The brethren coming from Rome would not know which branch S. Paul would take, and in order not to miss him would wait either here, or at the 'Three Taverns' or shops, ten miles nearer Rome.

The Appian road.

The Appian Way or street of Tombs, with the cypresses which intersperse them, retains still much of its beauty; the tombs of Caecilia Metella, wife of Crassus, and many others give us some idea of the ancient glories of a road which was a fitting approach to Rome.

v. 15. "And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as the Market of Appius, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

It was the goal of S. Paul's earnest longings: had he any foresight of the future position of Rome in Christendom, and of her subsequent corruption, the luxurious living and the evil days? We cannot tell,—but now, chained as he was, with soldiers round him, when he saw the brethren come to meet him he thanked God and took courage. The words coming from the pen of Luke the physician tell us how Paul was wearied, worn out, discouraged, suffering under the strain of all that time when he had been sustaining and encouraging all round him.

That the Christians should go forth to meet the expected teacher is in accordance with antient custom such as survives to this day among the Assyrian Christians, who hearing after their appeal to England—the only Church which would help their Church to revive—that missionaries were coming, went out fifteen miles along the road to meet them and give them new courage.

Two points of coincidence.

(1) "first man" of the island.

Turning back to the verses we have read there are first two points to notice. *v.* 7, Publius is called the "chief man," but more literally the "first" man of the island; it seems a plain though unusual way of speaking. But two inscriptions have been found, the first in Gaulus, an island near Malta,

mentioning the erection of a temple by Claudius Quirinus Prudens[1], the "first man," πρῶτος, or primate of the island; the second, a Latin inscription, of which only part remains, refers again to the "first man," or Primus of the *municipium* of Malta[2]. It is therefore the local title which S. Luke records. There was a Procurator for fiscal affairs, and a "Primus" for the government of the island, and this "Primus" was probably the delegate of the Praetor of Sicily.

Again, the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery; —or more correctly "fevers," the term is a technical medical term; the Greek physician Hippocrates, in a treatise in which he dwells on the danger of such a complication, uses this word in the plural in the same way: πυρετοὶ καὶ δυσεντερία. Another technical term occurs again in *v.* 10—"honoured us with many honours" or rather with "honoraria," or "fees." Do not these terms confirm the view that the author was a physician?

(α) "fevers."

(δ) τιμαῖς —the word for "fees."

But we do not wish the literary aspect, attractive as it is, to engross us to the exclusion of the human, which is the divine aspect of the history.

It is the physician who has noticed that S. Paul was flagging and near to breaking down; all he had done and suffered had exhausted his courage though he had sustained others until he was these few miles from the attainment of his desire. He had foreseen all before, and through the storm every prediction had been fulfilled, he had been calm and free from fear when others were paralysed, had inspired the confidence which enabled them to take food, and had supported Julius in maintaining control on board; he, the leading prisoner, had braved every hardship, had set to work on emerging from the sea, overcome the serpent, stayed disease.

The ἔλαβε θάρσος tells of previous strain.

Yet the physician noted the new impulse he received when he saw the brethren come to meet him—that "he took courage."

[1] "Κλ(αύδιος) Κυρ(ῖνος) Προύδηνς ἱππεὺς Ῥωμαίων πρῶτος Μελιταίων καὶ Γαυλῶν..." Böckh, *Corpus Inscr. Graec.* no. 5754.

[2] Ciantar. *de Antiqua Inscriptione nuper affossa in Melitae urbe Notabili* (1739), ap. Lewin. *op. cit.* II. p. 209.—"[Munic]ipi Mel. Primus..."—cf. *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, 11, ...εἰμὶ γὰρ πρῶτος τῆς πόλεως.

When faith is real, adverse circumstances feed it.

If faith is real, adverse circumstances do not shake it; if we feel near to breaking down we must not take this feeling to mean that faith has failed, because the natural buoyancy of character is strained. Faith underlies the character still, and the most unlikely thing may be the very one which will strengthen faith and give courage.

Joseph in his boyhood had visions of exaltation and power so vast that the telling of them drew upon him the rebuke of a loving father. The steps by which he was led—the pit, the slavery in Egypt—seem the most contradictory to these dreams, but his faith in God's fulfilment of His intention was never shaken. After the time in prison he could still say with assurance of faith, "*God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Joseph's position in the household of Potiphar may have seemed to him to be an opening to the path God wished him to tread; the favour of a beautiful, evil woman has too often been the way in which a man has risen to power; but Joseph's answer at the crisis was the answer of faith, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He knew that for his refusal an Egyptian dungeon faced him: yet he turned from the way which seemed to lead to the fulfilment of promise, taking that which appeared most adverse; and through the trial his faith sustained himself and reassured others, teaching for all time that adverse circumstances need not weaken faith.

Nothing could seem more pitiable than the position of S. Paul after such an utter wreck; nothing more untoward than the attack of the viper. But through all reversal of circumstances,—the cry of "murderer," which would have its effect on the soldiers; the contrasting cry "a god" shewing a spiritual wreckage more utter, more abhorrent to S. Paul than the shipwreck he had endured—through all this he remained unshaken: "the earth is weak and all the inhabiters thereof; I bear up the pillars of it." He knew and felt his true position and relation to God, he recognised even in the "philanthropy" of the islanders and the "friendly mind" of Publius that men may be "a law unto themselves," though

the horror of the spiritual wreckage round him was overwhelming.

We see the same ignorance, the same misery round us in London, the wreckage brought about by vice unrestrained; if we look at the other side and reckon even from a single equipage in some fashionable place, the amount of luxury that has become habitual, we must wonder how many of those who enjoy such things realise that they hold them in trust from God who gave them.

Yet faith must not fail; we know, as S. Paul knew, but knowledge must have its work.

We are disposed to think that supernatural gifts made things easier for S. Paul, giving him immunity from anxieties which must beset us; and that because he had power to speak the word of healing, as he knelt in the sick room of Publius[1] he must have been so conscious that God was near man as to be unconscious how far man was from God; the touch brought healing, peace was near. And it must indeed have been peace to find himself praying by Publius' bed, to find God there with him. But do the gifts of power and wealth make life easier? The man who has the gifts which make a statesman or a poet is conscious of a heavier burden than is borne by ordinary men. The gift of miraculous power is another talent given to man to be used for God, another responsibility to be accounted for. What a tax on human judgment to know how and when to use it! It is more likely that S. Paul felt the weight of responsibility, in the use of such powers, than that he enjoyed from the possession of them a comfort which would lull anxiety to rest. And the man on whose courage all had leant for so many months, feels the strain when all is said, all is done, and the end desired is near. His physician notes the change when he says he "took courage."

The burden of supernatural gifts.

God so near to Men! Men so far from God!

Courage is sometimes the most necessary of spiritual gifts because it is the great lack. There may be the clearest sight as to what is the right thing to do in those whose courage

'see Rome.' Sight of Christians *there.* ἔλαβε θάρσος.

[1] There is a natural tradition that Publius became the first Bishop of Melita and that his house is the Cathedral. It was so in spirit.

Courage is often given to courage.

fails to make it effectual. But we do not always realise that we can take courage as a gift, if we will not with a hopeless timorousness simply give way to a sense of our need. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given[1]:" scoffers apply this to human success, but our Lord said it of spiritual things. If we have only a little spirituality let us have courage to ask God to magnify it, to add to it as the Angel adds who increases the prayers of the faithful, wafting them up with "much incense" to God[2]. One man, one woman, in earnest in each family can convert the home; one man or one woman in earnest in society can work great changes in the world. If you look at the patience of any real sufferer who is trying diligently to do the will of God and see how suffering seems to increase sweetness, unselfishness, gentleness, unaffectedness, you will see that such a person is a more powerful preacher than any philosopher in the rostrum. S. Paul was chained, in the midst of those who had no sympathy with him. So the prisoner on a bed of pain, the man or woman bound in an unequal yoke, in whom is the love for Christ and devotion to Him, may do all that the grandest, strongest spirit could do.

[1] Matt. xiii. 12. Cf. Matt. xxv. 29; Lu. xix. 26.
[2] Rev. viii. 3.

LVI.

June 29th, 1892.

Rome.

Acts xxviii. 16—28.

The Appian Way and the City.

The Praetorium and its Praefect.

17–28. The History of S. Paul's Third Day in the City.
Its unsuccessfulness, and the reason.

28. The Christians unpopular, and yet S. Paul confident that they will have access to the Gentile more than to the Jewish mind. Why?

The next two years. Romans at present Liberal.

What relation between our difficulties and theirs.

v. 16. "And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him."

The "we" shews that S. Luke was still with S. Paul. They had left the "Three Taverns" and had walked over that great pavement of the Appian Way, formed of blocks of basalt which still shew the ruts made by the chariot wheels of the Masters of the World; passing between the tombs of which some are standing to this day, the tomb of Caecilia Metella, then the Jewish cemetery where so many touching inscriptions have been found; Paul could see the tomb of Caius Cestius, the Arch of Drusus, over which an aqueduct passed, dripping water; under his feet would be the catacombs, dug out to obtain sand for the building of Rome, gallery stretching beyond gallery, level below level; these were appropriated later by the Christians, that they might worship underground, and bury their dead and their martyrs in safety, writing over

The Appian Way.

them the words which are such a wonderful outcome of the Christian Faith—"IN PACE"; later again such tombs were used as altars, and chapels excavated round them. It is possible that the bodies of S. Peter and S. Paul himself may have lain in these catacombs over which he was passing[1]. Rome was the mother of the Christian faith, and then the corrupter of all that is pure and simple in it.

The City.

So this man, bearing his great message, passed in chains over the place where later lay the bones of those who died as martyrs for the faith he came to teach.

Then S. Paul would reach the Palatine, his abiding place, in the quarters of the Imperial Guard, a great quadrangle which can still be seen close to the Imperial palace. The guards were a fine body of chosen men, remarkable for their strength and courage, and the nobility of their bearing. Words given in the Authorised Version, which some think to have been inserted at a very early date in S. Luke's narrative, tell us that on arriving the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the Praetorian Guard. It is a beautiful touch of accuracy[2]. If the words are an insertion they were added by someone who knew the condition of things and the details of that time; for as a rule the Praetorian Guard had two Prefects or Captains, but at this time it happened that there was only one—Burrus Afranius, a man of fine character, who is described as doing good to all among whom he lived by his strength of character and discipline, and influencing the whole world then under Roman rule.

The Praetorian Guard and its Prefects.

S. Paul was given two great privileges: he was allowed to live in a house, or hired dwelling, not in the barracks, and in this lodging he was allowed to receive his friends in great numbers (*vv.* 23, 30) although he had a soldier with him all the time. If we ask why these privileges were accorded to

[1] Cf. *Cyprian*, by Archbishop Benson, pp. 481 ff.

[2] Cf. Professor Ramsay's view in *S. Paul the Traveller* that the words are part of the original text (p. 362), and his argument (following Mommsen) that the officer (*Stratopedarch*) referred to is not the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard but an inferior officer, the *princeps peregrinorum* (pp. 347, 348); S. Paul however would come later into the charge of the Praetorian Guard.

S. Paul, it seems clearly due to the effect of his conduct during the whole journey.

Picture the trial that it must have been to S. Paul to be thus chained to a soldier, day and night; the very fact of never being alone would be depressing to most spirits. Yet S. Paul speaks of himself cheerfully as "an ambassador in bonds[1]."

But it was a matter of terrible consequence to what kind of man the prisoner was chained, and the choice depended on the Captain. It is found in an old record that when Agrippa, before whom Paul stood, was himself a prisoner in Rome, it was directed that a "humane man" should be chosen for him to be chained to[2].

S. Paul continued two whole years without any trial, as a privileged prisoner, and he tells the Philippians (i. 12, 13) that the life did not hurt him: "I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the Gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Praetorian Guard, and to all the rest."

You will notice the discrepancy with the Authorised Version, and how this corrected translation fits in with the whole history: S. Paul was delivered to the Praetorian Guard on his arrival in Rome, so it was to them, in the barracks, not in "the palace," that he delivered the message of the Gospel; and thus his example made "most of the brethren in the Lord" "confident," and "more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (Phil. i. 14); they were encouraged to profess Christ openly, and not ashamed to speak the word Paul so loved.

The rest is the history of his third day in Rome.

History is not a journal of everyday life; therefore we have no detailed account of S. Paul's stay in Rome; the two years are summed up; the rest is the history of his one day in Rome.

He took two days to settle down there.

[1] Eph. vi. 20.

[2] Jos. *Ant.* XVIII. 6, 7.

Invited the πρῶτοι of the Jews—the right way.

v. 17. "And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews."

Here is a point worth our notice, which should be of great use to us in missionary work; we so often fail because we choose the poorest, the most uneducated to gather together first[1]. This is indeed not so much done as it used to be, and we trust the change of method will extend itself. The Gospel has power; it is the mind of God; let us grasp this which it needs no revelation to tell us; and surely we shall see that it is best to go first with this great Gospel message to those who hold the highest position, who are most highly educated; to begin with them will give us a strong centre to work from and make it easier to get others. Did not Augustine begin with the King and his Court? King Ethelbert was the centre in the south, King Oswald in the north: the Gospel message was entrusted to the chief in the land and it was left to them to spread it further.

So S. Paul spoke first to his own people in Rome, and called together the chief among them. They were people of importance; in Jewish cemeteries we find on tombs of such men the word "ἄρχοντες" used, meaning "chief leaders." S. Paul was faithful to his own nation; he did not begin by upbraiding the Jews for their high-mindedness; but called them brethren, telling them that he had done nothing against "the people." He goes on to say that the Romans had found him innocent of the charges brought by his own countrymen, and yet he has nothing of which to accuse his nation; he appeals simply for life.

vv. 17—20. "And when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar;

[1] Cf. p. 311, and *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. II. ch. x. on Foreign Missions, p. 458.

not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore did I intreat you to see and to speak with me: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

He tells them plainly, 'It is the Jews' cause I have at heart; I bring the message to my own people and therefore first call you, the chief of the Jews together, to hear what I have to say.' The Jewish religion went up to a certain point of hope, and there stood still: "because of the Hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." They had heard Moses and the Prophets foretelling this "Hope of Israel"; yet now, when it is fulfilled and the promises are carried out, they stop short; they cannot grasp the fact that the 'Hope' has come; so Paul stands chained.

He does not say, though he may have felt, 'The Romans are willing to release me, but not the Jews, so I appeal to Caesar against my own people.' No, he has the cause of the Jews at heart, and nothing of which to accuse his own nation.

The answer is a noble one:

Their reply.

vv. 21, 22. "And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judaea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against."

They had heard nothing after S. Paul's trial and departure from Caesarea, because Paul and his companions had outstripped the others who were sent with letters concerning him. This is not extraordinary when we remember Paul's perilous journey, pursued when sailing was so difficult; no one else had ventured so against wind and sea.

And the answer is, if we may use an everyday expression, a gentlemanly answer; they express their desire to hear what he has to say, but add 'there is no denying that you represent an unpopular sect; we are unpopular among the Romans, but your position is much worse; we should like to hear the teaching of your sect explained.'

There was no written explanation of the beliefs of this "Sect"; the first "Apology" for Christianity, or defence of its

belief had not then appeared. These Jews think it a subject of intense interest, and the calumnies were many; later on the Jews thought Christians worshipped the ass, and had other vague superstitions about them; the Romans also believed they worshipped an ass's head; on the plaster of a wall on the Palatine there has been found a scratching by some soldier representing the figure of a man crucified, with an ass's head and the words "Alexamenes adores his God[1]." How this originated we do not know; it may have been because our Lord rode into Jerusalem on an ass; but the picture proves more than this,—the knowledge that the belief of the Christians was connected with the crucifixion.

v. 23. "And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

He 'testifies the kingdom of God,' telling them that God Himself is their King, that the soldiers who serve Him are His loving subjects; and bidding his hearers forget in the greatness of their King their smallnesses, their quarrels, and think of His kingdom and the warfare for Him. He 'persuades them concerning Jesus,' shewing how He was foretold by Moses and the Prophets, and was Himself King of the Jews. He labours all day from morning till evening.

vv. 24, 25 (1st part). "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed,—"

Candour as to unsuccess.

Is not this a touch of candour,—that they did not agree among themselves?—it reminds us of the words at the end of S. Matthew's Gospel (xxviii. 17) that "some doubted" even among His chosen eleven. Touches like these go to prove the veracity of writers; they would not tell these details if they themselves doubted the doctrines they taught. We notice this same candour in all S. Luke's writing.

[1] Cf. *Civilta Catholica*, series 3, vol. IV. p. 529. Cf. Tertullian, *Apologet.* XVI. *ad Nationes*, I. 10; Minucius Felix, IX. 28.

vv. 25—28. "...after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear."

Dreadful warning. Gentile Mission.

'Wilfully blind and deaf.'

The darkness deepens round them, as we come to this awful passage. Let us sum up the verses; 'they are wilfully deaf—they will not hear; wilfully blind,—they will not see; and they will not suffer their hearts to understand lest they should be converted and I should heal them; their heart is waxed gross.'

The unaccountable attributed to God—and so it rightly is.

In Isaiah (vi. 10) from which this is quoted the passage runs, "Make the heart of this people fat"—that is 'gross' or 'coarse.' The hardening is attributed to God, for the Jews attributed to the immediate action of God all that was unaccountable and beyond their understanding—to Him who governs the world by laws whose action is unaccountable. His actions are unaccountable, yet all He does, as in His creation, is always good. We see this Jewish way of speaking in several instances, as when Pharaoh understands that it is God's will that he should let God's people go, but revokes, as soon as the plague ceases, the permission he has given. We read (Ex. x. 1), "Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants;" but again (Ex. viii. 32), "Pharaoh hardened his heart." In our own day sudden, unaccountable death is still spoken of as the "visitation of God," and we still tend to account for unexpected calamities as coming directly from the hand of God. S. Luke gives no details; why could they not hear and receive S. Paul's teaching? "Their heart is waxed gross."

Effect on Praetorium —furtherance of the Gospel.

What was the effect of the message on the Gentiles? We see it in S. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (iv. 22). The

[Effect] on "Caesar's household" not like S. James's Chapel.

simple allusion to the converts in Caesar's household shews that the Philippians knew already of these Christians. And there were other Gentile households which became Christian; whole families which had been in favour suddenly disappeared and were heard of no more. We have heard of Pomponia, herself a believer, who helped the Christians. Poppaea, of whom it is said that she had every advantage but an honourable mind[1], still when she rose to power and became Empress, defended the Jews and saved the Christians as far as she was able. Bishop Lightfoot[2] has treated the subject of how far the influence of Christianity may be seen in the writings of Seneca.

Companions.

In the midst of this warfare S. Paul was not alone; S. Luke was with him, and Aristarchus also, who is mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 10) as S. Paul's fellow-prisoner; and S. Paul sends a salutation from him in his Epistle to Philemon. Timothy also was in Rome, and Mark, who had before left Paul, was with him again[3] there (Col. vi. 10) as well as Tychicus the Ephesian (Col. iv. 7), one of those on whose account the riot began in Jerusalem. Demas, with Luke the beloved physician, sends a greeting from Rome (Col. iv. 14), that same Demas who afterwards forsook S. Paul, for he loved this present world (2 Tim. iv. 10). Thus we see that S. Paul had round him a group of friends, dear friends and powerful men; yet he was not without troubles.

'Boldness' and Opposition on parallel lines.

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife" (Phil. i. 15), endeavouring to draw off Paul's followers. Even those who were Christians were not perfect, some were envious of his followers and preached not in sincerity, but thinking to add by divisions to the afflictions of Paul (*v.* 17). Should we not say in such a case, 'The real people stand by us; the others are separated from us by their tone, they do not belong

[1] "Huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere, praeter honestum animum." Tac. *Ann.* XIII. 45.

[2] *S. Paul and Seneca*, by J. B. Lightfoot: reprinted in *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 247—316. Bishop Lightfoot is very doubtful as to whether Christianity had any influence on the writings of Seneca.

[3] Cf. p. 595.

to us'? But how did S. Paul meet this? "What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (*v.* 18). Let us fill in this picture for ourselves, the factions, the friends with their different characters, the soldiers; these receive the teaching of Paul, are the first to hear, and being soldiers are not afraid. Rome itself is kind in its treatment of Paul.

Liberality of Rome at present.

vv. 30, 31[1]. "And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him."

So this beautiful close of the Acts of the Apostles shews how Paul went on unhindered; no steps were taken against him, he had no trial for two years; he simply preached and saw all who came to him.

Some people say this ending is abrupt; why does it break off here, and tell us no more? Because this is not the end but the beginning; the message is committed in faith to future years, it is handed down, is still being preached and taught in our day; let us take our share and go on with this work; dig deep, as we have not yet done, into the Acts of the Apostles; follow their simple teaching, seeking for wisdom, the Highest Wisdom, where it can be found, believing what is written for our help and guidance, and above all, living on these lines.

Paul parts for ever from the Jews, his own people; they would not hear nor see; and he turns to the Gentiles.

We ask ourselves, 'Why do our own people not believe—our brothers, our sisters?' But first let us ask ourselves, Why do *we* not believe? Are we content to give up for Christ's sake, or only to do so to a certain point, and then stop short, —as the Jews believed up to a certain point in the Hope of Israel? Do we care too much for self to go on? Up to a certain point we are unselfish, self-denying; but beyond that point we will not go—we change our tone and behaviour. To

[1] *v.* 29 is only shewn in the R.V. as a marginal reading, given by some antient authorities.

be true Christians we must not only use the words of Christ, but live by them, we cannot see clearly without His power to guide us, we do not believe sufficiently; we cannot help others, we cannot answer the question why others do not believe.

They heard and saw but the heart thickened. The impressions shallow, heard heavily, drowsy eyes.

What is God's purpose? To increase intelligence and observation in man that he may see clearly, that he may hear and understand. As with the Jews the heart is waxed gross, is dull; we may hear sounds of Eternal truth, but if we do not listen we cease to hear. We do not arrive at a clear insight or understanding because the heart is not true towards the Father who is so tender, so gentle, and yet so firm with His children; and thus the heart becomes coarsened and hardened. Those who have the hardest hearts do not shew strong but weak faces; hard men have an expression not indeed like that of a true woman, but effeminate. For the hardening of the heart comes from allowing impressions to fall lightly, wiping an impression away as soon as it is made by light talking, by want of even the endeavour to alter our thoughts and our ways. From morning to night impressions are being made on us by God, but we let them pass unheeded. We do not say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*"—not to say, or to think, not only to feel, but to do.

Forms of hardening, (1) Belief that we could bear our fate.

There are many ways of hardening the heart; the hardening which comes from drifting, slipping, being afraid of facing trials and strife; from saying, "I can't help it; I shall slide to the bottom and must bear my fate." This is a delusion: you cannot face the results, they are too strong for you. You know the verse in the Psalms of this morning[1]. "Let hot burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire, and into the pit, that they never rise up again." It is like the last cry, as if the pit were about to close its mouth upon us; we *could* not bear it; we *could* not face it. Do not let us delude ourselves with the idea that we could bear everlasting perdition.

Another way in which hardening comes is from having a

[1] Ps. cxl. 10, Prayer Book Version.

dull, sullen feeling about our Lord's character; thinking His treatment of the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, was too hard. Such a position is folly; it is to make ourselves the standard from which to judge our Lord's character and standard of life. He is the Truth of God, God Himself: but some would drag Christ down to their own level, instead of trying to drag self up to Christ. Let us pray Him to make our hearts like His own, to conform our standard to His, to make our character more like His.

(2) Sullen feeling as to character of our Lord.

And another form of hardening comes from being full of uncertainties and doubts. Yet many do not take the trouble to prove the doubt true nor to disprove it, for it is easier to believe the teaching of doubt about anything we cannot understand, than to search it out and prove it right or wrong. But such a course is insane; if doubts suggested by critics may be true they must be proved to be so; but if we say they cannot be proved, and begin to believe in the doubt, and get hazy, we become hardened. Are any of you uneasy or unhappy about the teaching your children receive? If you were, and if this teaching were of vital importance to you, you would see about it yourselves, and not leave it to others.

(3) Acting on uncertainties, as certainties.

Uncertainties become certainties when we dwell on them, and allow them to pursue their course; and so the heart gets hardened. It is no good to say that we must bear the result. We shall not be able to face the real anger of God. If we settle our standard for ourselves, and do not seek the will of Christ, if we surround ourselves with uncertainties, we shall lose power, and the vices round us, the sudden deaths from day to day will have no effect on us, because we are not trying to conform our lives to what we believe.

Two pictures lie before us. Let us pray to be like the noble man whose life we have been studying; who under trials, disparagement, cared nothing for self if Christ his Lord and Master was being made known to others. If we were like him people would come to us, "from morning until evening," to know how such peace is ours; and we should 'teach the things concerning Christ with all boldness, no man forbidding us.'

"Ambassador in Bonds." Then bonds, old age, such companionship, are not hindrances.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (*Ramsay*).

Date	Event	As given in Acts	As given in Epistles	Refs. to S. Paul the Traveller
				pages
32 or 33, Jan. 25	CONVERSION	ix., xxii.	Gal. i. 15	376
34	In Arabia and Damascus	ix. 19	Gal. i. 17	379
34 or 35	*1st visit to Jerusalem* ...	ix. 26	Gal. i. 18	381
35–43	At Tarsus...	ix. 30, xi. 25	Gal. i. 22	46
43	At Antioch	xi. 26	2 Cor. xii. 2	45
44	Prophecy of Agabus ...	xi. 28	Gal. ii. 2	49
45	Famine at Jerusalem ...	xi. 28	... ...	49–68
45–46 win.	*2nd visit to Jerusalem* ...	xi. 29	Gal. ii. 1	51, 68
„ „	Revelation of Mission ...	xxii. 17	... ...	61
„ „	Return to Antioch ...	xii. 25	... ...	51–64
	MISSIONARY PERIOD.			
46 (or 47) Mar.	I MISSIONARY JOURNEY	xiii. 4	... ...	64–67
„ „ –July	In Cyprus	xiii. 4–13	... ...	70, 88
„ „ July	„ Pamphylia	xiii. 13	... ...	89–97
„ „ win.	„ Pisidian Antioch ...	xiii. 14–51	Gal. iv. 13	98–107
47 (or 48) sum.	„ Iconium	xiii., xiv.	2 Tim. iii.	107–110
„ „ aut.	„ Lystra	xiv. 7–21	... ...	110–119
47–8 (or 48–9)	„ Derbe	xiv. 21	... ...	120
48 or 49 Feb.–May	Return by Stages ...	xiv. 21–25	... ...	120–123
48 or 49 Aug.	In Perga	xiv. 25	... ...	124
„ „ Aug.	Return to Antioch ...	xiv. 27	... ...	125
49 (end)	*3rd visit to Jerusalem* ...	xv. 4	... ...	152–174
49 (end)	Return to Antioch ...	xv. 30	... ...	174
50 spr.	II MISSIONARY JOURNEY	xv. 40	... ...	174–176
50 sum.	In Galatia	xvi. 1–6	Gal. iv. 16	178–189
50 Oct.	Across Asia to Troas ...	xvi. 6–8	... ...	194, 212
50 Oct.	Reached Philippi ...	xvi. 12	... ...	226
50 Dec.	„ Thessalonica ...	xvii. 1	1 Thess. i.	226
51 May	„ Beroea	xvii. 10	... ...	228
51 Aug.	„ Athens	xvii. 15	... ...	232
51 Sept.	1st visit to Corinth ...	xviii. 1	... ...	254
52	Defection of Galatians ...	... ...	... ...	189
52	THESSALONIANS ...	... ...	... ...	260
53 Mar.	*4th visit to Jerusalem* ...	xviii. 22	... ...	263
53 Apr.	GALATIANS	... ...	... ...	189
53	III MISSIONARY JOURNEY	xviii.	... ...	265
53 sum.	In Galatia	xviii. 23	... ...	265
53 Dec.	Reached Ephesus ...	xix. 1	... ...	265

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (*Ramsay*).

Date	Event	As given in Acts	As given in Epistles	Refs. to S. Paul the Traveller
				PAGES
55–56 win.	1 CORINTHIANS ...	... ...	1 Cor. xvi. 8	275
56 Mar.	Journey to Macedonia ...	xx. 1	... ...	283
56 sum.	2 CORINTHIANS ...	... ...	2 Cor. xvii. 6	286
56 Dec.	2nd visit to Corinth ...	xx. 2	... ...	286
57 Jan.	ROMANS	... ...	Rom. xv. 25	288
57 Feb.	Left Corinth	xx. 3	... ...	289
57 Ap. 15	„ Philippi	xx. 6	... ...	290
57 Ap. 19	Reached Troas	xx. 6	... ...	293
57 Ap. 25	„ Mitylene ...	xx. 14	... ...	294
57 Ap. 28	„ Miletus ...	xx. 15	... ...	294
57 May 1	„ Coos	xxi. 1	... ...	294
57 May 2	„ Rhodes ...	xxi. 1	... ...	294
57 May 3	„ Patara	xxi. 1	... ...	294
57 May 4	„ Myra	xxi. 1	... ...	294
57 May 7	„ Tyre	xxi. 3	... ...	295
57 May 13	„ Ptolemais ...	xxi. 7	... ...	295
57 May 14	„ Caesarea ...	xxi. 8	... ...	301
57 May 28	*5th visit to Jerusalem* ...	xxi. 15	... ...	295
	CAPTIVITY PERIOD.			
57–59	*Imprisonment*	xxiii.–xxvi.	... ...	295
59 Aug. 17	Voyage to Rome begun...	xxvii. 1	... ...	321
59 Sep. 1	Reached Myra	xxvii. 5	... ...	321
59 Sep. 25	„ Fair Havens ...	xxvii. 8	... ...	321
59 Oct.	Left Fair Havens ...	xxvii. 13	... ...	322
59 Nov.	Shipwreck	xxvii.	... ...	345
60 Feb.	Left Malta	xxviii. 11	... ...	345
60 Feb.	*Reached Rome*	xxviii. 14	... ...	346
60–61	EPHESIANS ...	... ...	... ...	349
61 (early)	COLOSSIANS ...	... ...	... ...	349
61 (early)	PHILEMON ...	... ...	... ...	349
61 (late)	PHILIPPIANS ...	... ...	... ...	357
61–62 win.	*Trial and acquittal* ...	... ...	... ...	360
62–65 (or 66)	Later Travels			
	1 TIMOTHY TITUS			
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66–67	*Martyrdom*	... ...	... ...	362

Professor Ramsay has kindly revised the above table and brought it up to date with his later investigations into Pauline chronology.

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